

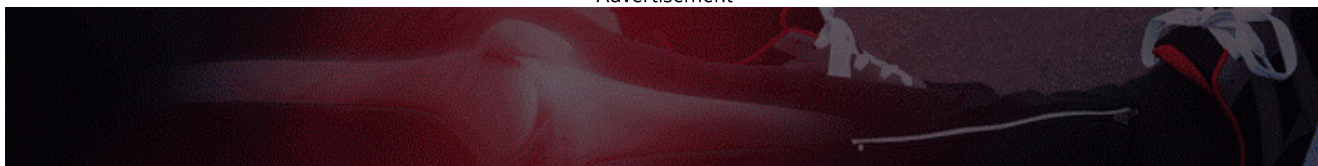
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YouthSoccerInsider

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

What leagues want from their refs

by Randy Vogt

There are a many ways to communicate with one another nowadays and the preferred method for refs often is through e-mail. Every few months, I receive an e-mail from a youth league, college conference or an assignor about what the refs need to concentrate on. These e-mails are the same no matter the year, and fit into one of the following categories:



Call the Game Tighter. I've never received an e-mail where the refs were instructed that they are interrupting play too much and that they need to be more lenient in their enforcement of the rules. But I've received so many e-mails telling the refs to call the games tighter. If they do, the retaliatory foul would be avoided. After all, refs are paid to blow their whistle and keep control of the game for the safety of the players.

Ref Female Games as Seriously as You Ref Male Games. The e-mails state many issues that assignors and leagues have noticed from refs officiating different genders. When refs do not take female games as seriously as male games, they do not stay as close to the play or even give pre-game instructions to the AR's. If they do not take a game seriously, do not be surprised if there's a game control issue that most likely could have been prevented if they had been working hard all game.

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There is a perception among some refs that females do not commit violent fouls against one another. So what would be a red card when males are playing is often just a foul with no card (not even a yellow) for the same foul when females are playing. Yet girls and women deliberately foul opponents, sometimes even violently.

Look and Act Professional at All Times. This is the easiest of the three issues to solve as you need not have any actual referee ability to look and act appropriately. Refs should be at the field 30 minutes before the game and look the part. Clean uniform with the appropriate patch and shined shoes. This might seem crazy to have to mention, but the officials should all be wearing the same color shirt, as I've seen more than my share of youth soccer games where the refs and AR's were wearing different colors.

Years ago, I was assigned to ref a youth soccer game with a Little League game to be played at the same sports complex. When I arrived, I saw an umpire who

was an older gentleman looking toward the entrance of the parking lot with a worried expression on his face. The two Little League teams were warming up. It was 45 minutes before my game, which I was reffing solo, so I decided to wait and see if the other umpire showed up. A few minutes later, a younger ump in his early 20s pulls up, gets out of his car to shake the hand of the older gentleman. I could tell that they did not know one another. The older ump waits as the younger ump proceeded to put on his uniform in the parking lot. It gets worse as it looked like the younger ump had been out all night. As they walked to the field, I yelled to the younger ump, "Excuse me, you left your car door wide open."

I don't know much about baseball but could be confident in stating that I did not think the young ump was going to have a good game.

Acting professional includes treating everybody the same at the field. If the ref spends a couple of minutes talking with a coach before the game whom he or she knows well, the ref should spend the same amount of time with the other coach. After all, it does not look good to the coach who drove 300 miles if the ref hardly says a word before checking the passes, then jokes around with the home coach for the next five minutes before checking that team's passes.

([Randy Vogt](#), the author of "Preventive Officiating," has [officiated more than 10,000 games.](#))



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