



North Allegheny Soccer Club



Game Day Notes for NASC Coaches, Referees, Team Parents, and Volunteers

First of all, thank you for your cooperation in getting this soccer season underway.

Our club is privileged to have a very active program with hundreds of players, dozens of volunteer coaches, and over 70 certified referees. The attached notes are provided to help us all get off on the right foot and work together in a smooth and enjoyable way.

Coaches, Assistants, Parents, Players and Referees, this applies to us all!

The ZERO TOLERANCE policy means just that, no exceptions. Please review it (see below). You agreed to it when you registered with NASC. In a nutshell the things to remember are **Encouragement and Respect at All Times**.

At NASC The number one reason we lose referees, especially youth, is that they don't like getting shouted at or dealing with aggressive coaches. Some referees are new, other are learning, but after 15 or 20 hours of instruction and passing an exam, they are in charge of the game, even from 12 years old. Remember, Coaches and Referees are on the same team at NASC, we all want to provide a safe, fair and fun environment for players.

However, the referees may not always be right (no one is perfect) and we want to hear the coaches viewpoint too. If you have a good experience with a referee, tell them about it. If you have a bad experience, save it, and tell us after the game. We need to know in either case so we can better match the referees and the games. Send a message to nascrefs@gmail.com to reach both myself and Mr. Bill Grom, our Assignor.

Coaches: Use the [Google Referee Assignment Calendar](#) to verify your game field/times/referees, please check this no later than one day before your game. The Assignor will cancel referees for games if notified of a cancellation, but changes to the game time/location/referees need a minimum of five days notice.

As a NASC coach for 14 seasons and a referee for 20 seasons I understand both sides of the whistle. I have compiled some guidelines below which can help you as coaches and referees have a smooth, controlled game. Please read and reflect on them.

If you don't have time right now, make sure you set aside some time to read them before your next game or practice. There are likely to be one or more things that you can do to improve in future games, however long you have been doing your job.

Send me any comments or tips of your own that you think would be useful in the future.

Sincerely,

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Foul Ref!

The referee's primary function is to ensure safety. At higher age groups the players are bigger, stronger, faster, and the contest is harder.

Referees should not let contact build to dangerous levels, but nor should they disrupt the flow of the game by stopping for every ball with a hard tackle.

Referees set the tone for the game. Calling the first foul helps the players, coaches, and parents understand the limits on contact.

Refs - don't think "I'll call it next time" players will often be looking to see what they can get away with.

The player who just got floored may well get his opponent back harder, and you can lose control of the game.

Remember not every player that falls over is fouled (even though the parents might think so).

If you see something that you do not want to call as a foul, like a player tripping over himself, tripping after the ball was played fairly, or an accidental handball, say something like "No foul" or "Keep playing". It shows you were watching and made a decision, and can prevent retaliation.

If someone gets knocked off their feet by a charge it was probably excessive. If the attacker is tripped on a run, blow the whistle quickly for a direct kick.

Run by the downed player and ask if they are OK. Tell the other player to calm it down a bit, or that you are keeping an eye on them.

If two players collide dangerously at speed with no obvious foul, especially at U12 or below, whistle to stop the play, check they are OK, and tell them to calm down, restart with a drop ball.

Coaches – teach your players in practice what level of contact you want from your team, remember their conduct on the field is your responsibility.

Reinforce that they should never retaliate - often the player that strikes back is the one that gets noticed.

Instead, tell them to be vocal, say "hey, stop pushing me!", so the refs can get an idea of things happening behind their back.

If your players come off the field to substitute, or at half-time, complaining that the game is too rough, let the referees know at the half time break.

The center referee (CR) is the one to stop play for a foul, but the assistant referee (AR) can signal with a flag in case the CR didn't see the shove or shirt-pull that deserves a foul.

Refs - not positive if a foul occurred in the penalty box? It may well affect the outcome of the game, so glance at the AR for confirmation. When play has been stopped approach the AR and talk (privately) if you need, it gives the weight of two referees to the decision.

"Handball!"

I often hear players, parents, and coaches call for this one, but intentional handballs are very rare.

It is NOT a handball every time the ball touches someone's hand.

Did the player touch the ball intentionally or by accident?

If they were protecting themselves did they gain an advantage?

Consider, if the player's hand played the ball it's a direct kick, if the ball played the hand it's not.

Refs, call out "No foul" to let the players know you saw what happened and want play to continue.

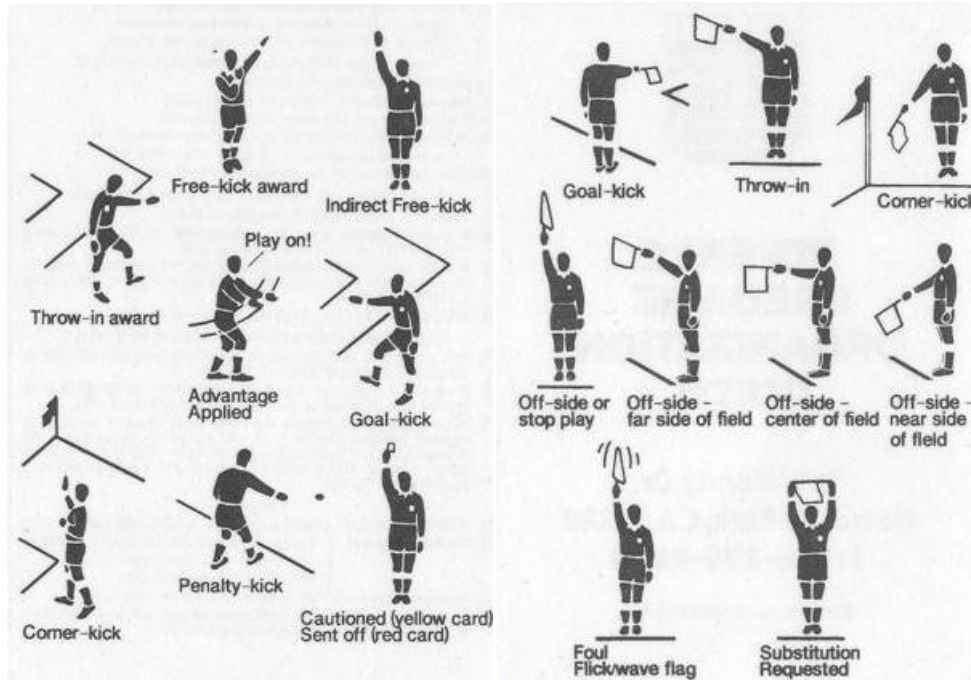
“Hey Ref, what was the call?”

If you don't understand a call, it's OK for a coach or player to ask.

The referee should answer, if they have time and are close enough, or mime the infringement.

Loud whistles and clear hand and flag signals from the referees help everyone on the field understand what is going on.

The ref may not whistle for obvious calls, like a kick way out of bounds, using signals instead.



Coaches should make sure their players understand the [referee signals](#) - have them print it out and learn them. ...And the [Laws of the Game](#) – make them read it as homework!

In my own case becoming a referee helped my coaching, and teaching my players helped their game because they knew more about what was going on.

We have many parent/child referee teams at NASC. Our assignor loves assigning them to the same field to work together, and our referees love getting paid too!

Injuries

If someone has a hard tackle or has to be taken off during the game, the coach must let the referee know at the end of the game if the player has not recovered.

Referees must file a report to ensure the player receives secondary medical insurance through PA-West.

Referees - If there is an injury in the first half, check with the coach at half time.

The official Line

Going “by the book”, if a player (or coach) enters or leaves the field without permission the referee can issue a yellow card as a caution, though I don't know that any referee would do this if there was an injury they had not noticed. I certainly have never heard of it. The point is that the referee decides how to stop and restart the game to deal with the downed player. It is not OK for a coach or parent to just run on to the field.

What the coaches can do

Some coaches teach their players to sit down if there is an injury, and for older players, teach them to kick the ball out of play so the injury can be addressed. The opposing team should return the ball to the team that kicked the ball out when play resumes as a courtesy. If the team doesn't get the idea to put the ball out of play, the ref can blow the whistle, signal for the coach to attend the player and restart with a drop-ball. A sporting team will give the ball to the last team with possession.

What sometimes happens...

Most often players involved in a hard collision where play is stopped limp off the field with their coach, and a few seconds more before play stops won't make a difference to the player's safety, though it can give the appearance of disregard for the player by the referee.

In some cases the injured player goes down after the play has moved upfield. The upfield referees and other players are concentrating on the ball. The increased shouting with the ball going toward the goal doesn't usually mean "player down". The assistant referees, especially the one in the center referees field of view, should signal with a flag (substitute style) to alert the ref, who can then tell the players to put the ball out, or stop the play. For myself, if I saw player the player behind me was face down on the field, I would stop play. If he was holding his leg, I would tell the players to kick the ball out and give them a few seconds. The call is up to the center referee of that game.

Coaches - One important detail is to let the referee know at the end of a game if any injuries persist so he can get the information to file the appropriate match report with PA West.

"He's offsides ref!"

When I hear this it almost never is - If you don't know how to spell it you probably don't know how to call it. Coaches, make sure you understand the offside law (#11) when the age group requires it, and teach offside to your players at practice.

The only viewpoint guaranteed to determine offside is a correctly positioned AR. They get to see directly across the field to the second-to-last defender, and can tell if an attacking player was in the offside position when the ball was kicked. Was the offside player involved in active play? Are they gaining an advantage, even by being a distraction?

The AR has to constantly be looking between the ball-in-play and the second -to-last-defender to make sure he is in position at all times.

Coaches, if your players can recognize when they are in the offside position, they can walk back ignoring the ball and should not be penalized.

There is no offside on a throw-in, goal kick or corner kick, but pay special attention to what happens after the ball is touched.

A corner kicker often remains in the offside position, and can be offside if he receives the ball back.

Remember, offside is "in the opinion of the referee."

Heckling from parents or coaches

Refs - The best way to deal with heckling is not to let it start - referees that call a clean game probably won't have to deal with it.

If you have spectators saying bad things like "Kick her back!", or "get him next time", or challenging your decisions, tell the parents "positive encouragement only please", and make sure to call the next foul. If it continues, stop the game if necessary and ask the coach to deal with the parents, it's their responsibility.

If you have difficulties with a coach berating referees or players, politely ask them to stop – if they don't calm down, check for an adult referee or ask the other coach to help.

Coaches – do yourselves a favor, If your fellow coach is getting too excited, remind them that this is a game for the benefit of the players.

In extreme cases for competitive games the referee can give the offending coach a yellow card (unsporting behavior, dissent), or a red card (abusive language/gesture, second yellow card.)

The card is never shown to the coach, but is recorded in the match report. A red card means the offender must leave the field of play and technical area.

For in-house games the referee can just stop the game, they are not paid to be embarrassed or abused.

Always contact the referee coordinators and let us know what happened so we can follow up and prevent a reoccurrence.

Substitutions

Refs should tell the coaches and players how you want them to sub during the check-in – it's too late during the game.

e.g. Players be ready at the center line before calling for subs.

Call player's names one-at-a-time.

Wait for the player to come off the field before going on.

Watch the Center Referee in case he waves you on sooner.

I often ask the players if they know that the penalty for entering or leaving the field without permission is a yellow card!

Teach this with patience at U10, expect more from older players.

If the number of players running off the field matches the players waiting to go on, the CR can allow them on sooner to speed up the game.

Substitutions are allowed on any stoppage, but at the referee's discretion. The CR can overrule if the players are not ready, or the defending coach uses a sub to stall an attack.

Keep an eye for waiting players so you are ready to sub at the next stoppage.

Coaches can teach this to players at practice, try it out in a scrimmage, and remind them at the game.

Clear the touchline

The AR needs at least a yard of space to run alongside the touchline in his quadrant and must be able to see the entire touchline for out-of-bounds calls.

Players, coaches, and parents should keep one yard or more back from the touchline at all times, and only subs ready to go on the field should be closer than a few yards to the centerline.

As a coach I used my bag to mark the corner of the technical area and called it a "deadline".

Coaches, you and your players should always be on the opposite side of the field to the parents.

End Game

CR and ARs meet to oversee the line-up. Unsporting behavior is less likely to occur if refs are right there watching.

Review the [PA West Travel Game Procedures](#) before the game, remember, you are paid to know what you are doing.

Referees - Score and sign the line-up cards, get player details for Match Report cautions or injuries before you give the player passes back to the coaches.

If you see teams leaving drink wrappers, orange peels or equipment behind, ask the coach to have his players tidy up for the next team.

Coach more in practice and less at the game.

Don't try to teach the players on the field during the game, it's too late.

Train them in practice, and use positive reinforcement in the games.

Keep your subs by your side and talk them through the game, it's a great learning opportunity and can keep younger players engaged.

If you must correct players on the field, try not to single out one person, tell the whole team, or let it wait until they are subs on the touchline, or at half time.

Don't dwell on what just happened, you can't change it, focus on what to do next.

Did you know?

- Players often can't hear or understand you properly on the field.

- Players often don't listen, especially after negative comments.

- Players will eventually tune negative coaches out completely.

But probably...

- Parents on both teams can hear you

- Other coaches can hear you

- Referees can hear you

You may or may not win the game but you can easily lose respect.

The effect of a coach's behavior can be more lasting than the outcome of the game.

As a coach you should represent knowledge of the game, as well as fairness, cooperation, leadership, and respect for others.

Think "role model". It's not about winning, it's about enjoying the game.

Keeping us in the loop

If a referee exceeds your expectations, please tell them.

If they systematically allow unsafe play, or make mistakes that should be corrected, [tell me](#).

E-mail nascrefs@gaylers.net to reach me, or call one of the numbers.

E-mail nascrefs@gmail.com to reach all referee coordinators.

Here are some useful links:

[Laws of the Game](#),

[Guide to Procedures](#),

[PA West Match Report](#)

[Offside- Not Offside](#) examples

NASC Zero Tolerance Policy

The North Allegheny Soccer Club (NASC) has a Zero Tolerance Policy regarding behavior and language that are inappropriate for youth sporting events. Inappropriate behavior and language include, but are not limited to, aggressive physical contact of any kind or other intimidating physical behavior; argumentative or disparaging yelling or screaming directed at players, referees, or others; and profanity or other derogatory or demeaning comments made to or about players, referees, or others. Coaches and assistant coaches are responsible for their own behavior and should monitor, address, and report to the board inappropriate behavior on the part of their fellow coaches, players, and parents. NASC sponsors recreational soccer leagues. Players are learning. Coaches are learning. Referees are learning. All will make mistakes. Your conduct should be governed by two principles: **encouragement and respect**. Players, coaches, referees, and parents who do not comport themselves in conformance with this policy shall not be entitled to NASC membership and will not be permitted to participate in NASC events.

Well, thank you for reading to the end of this message.

I hope there is something that you can use to improve in future games, and feel free to contact me if there are any issues that can be addressed.

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[Referee's Corner](#) - NASC website
[Referee Assignments](#) - Google Calendar
[PA West e-Referee System](#) - class registrations