

JOE KNOWS AYSO

Winter 2002

AYSO frequently receives questions regarding rules, regulations, policies, interpretation of FIFA Law and AYSO modifications. In my new position as National Referee Administrator, I am often asked to respond. The following are some of the interesting questions I recently received:

Question –

Joe, can you clarify what you mean when you wrote that “referees in general should pay more attention to what is happening off the field and take appropriate action”?

Answer –

When I said referees should pay more attention to what is happening off the field and take appropriate action, I was trying to convey the idea that in AYSO referees should be attentive to potential problems or situations both on and off the field that could escalate into an environment not conducive to good child development.

AYSO is about kids first and soccer second. For the most part at the high school, college and particularly professional level, referees pay little attention to what is happening off the field and simply concentrate on controlling play on the field. The AYSO mission is: To develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs which **promote a fun, family environment** based on our philosophies; Everyone Plays, Balanced Teams, Open Registration, Positive Coaching and Good Sportsmanship. I believe an essential responsibility for AYSO referees is to help promote a fun, family environment where positive coaching and good sportsmanship are modeled for the young players by the adults present. This cannot be done by referees if they do not pay attention to activities off the field.

We have all too often witnessed or heard about the ridiculous behavior of adults at some youth sporting events. I believe, that if referees were attentive and wisely utilized the influence and authority they have, we would see a dramatic reduction in the number of these incidents. Adults are primarily result oriented (winning or losing) whereas children are more interested in the process (playing). When referees allow adults to pollute the atmosphere with unacceptable comments or behavior then they are not helping to promote that fun, family environment.

Basically, this involves the referee conveying to all present his or her feelings regarding unacceptable comments or behavior. This can easily be overdone by the inexperienced or over officious referee. The judicious use of body language, a look, a gesture, a word or two can convey the message to those present that the referee has seen or heard something which is unacceptable. The idea is to nip the behavior in the bud before it escalates.

Question –

“Joe, are players allowed to switch jerseys with another player during substitutions or half time?”

Answer –

Referees are supposed to be able to identify individual players throughout the

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match. In AYSO, prior to the match the referee is often provided with a lineup card from each team identifying the players. The referee uses this information to record the number of quarters each player has played to ensure a minimum playing time of one half the match for each player. The referee needs to be able to identify individual players to record misconduct infractions and to insure that players are sent off (red card) if they receive a second caution (yellow card). All of these activities require the referee to be able to identify individual players. Numbered jerseys are the most common means of player identification.

If players do not have numbered jerseys for any reason, the referee should be informed before the match in order for him or her to be able to identify players. If there is any question regarding the legality of players in a match the referee should include this in the game report he/she is required to complete including description of events requiring review by the Region. It is the responsibility of the Region to review these referee reports and to take further action if appropriate.

Preprinted AYSO player Identification cards are available from the AYSO Registration Department upon request for a small fee (\$0.15 each) or blank ID cards are available from the AYSO Supply Center (\$5.00 for 250 or \$1.00 for 10). ID cards are helpful when player identification is a problem.

Question –

Joe, how should a youth referee approach a situation with an abusive adult they suspect is intoxicated? Can an adult step in and help?

Answer –

AYSO recommends youth referees be scheduled with an adult referee to help with difficult situations which might arise. If another adult referee is not available, an AYSO registered adult representative of the region is the next best alternative. The coaches may not be viewed as neutral depending upon the circumstances but should also be supportive. However, assisting a youth referee having problems with an intoxicated individual is not only anyone's right but indeed their responsibility.

Question –

Joe, if a player is sent off (red carded) at half-time, is the team required to "play short" by one player to start the second half?

Answer –

A player who is sent off (red carded) at half-time may not be replaced, that is, that player's team must start the second half with one fewer players.

Additional information supplied by Bill Mason, AYSO FIFA Law Interpreter:

"A player sent off prior to the start of the game may be replaced by a named substitute, that is, the team is not required to play short. Once a proper kick-off has occurred to start the game, any player sent off shall not be replaced by a substitute – the team must, for the remainder of that game, play with one fewer players. A player remains a player until the proper substitution procedure

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occurs, including during the half-time interval. In AYSO this substitution normally occurs just prior to the start of the second half. It is important that the referee knows at all times who are the players and who are the substitutes. This interpretation is not that of AYSO, but is the universal FIFA interpretation.”