

Greetings,

The High School Playoffs are upon us. I think that is part of my job to remind you of things you already know ... However, these things are important. As experienced officials - working with other experienced officials - we sometimes think everyone is on the same page when, in fact, we are not. So here goes.

Before each Playoff match:

- Plan to arrive about an hour before the match
- The CR should lead a complete pre-game discussion to review the duties of all officials - even if you have worked together before (see my recommendations below)
- Walk the stadium/field together; identify any issues with the pitch; ask the host team's coach or AD to fix them
- Walk among the players; identify and correct any uniform issues
- Meet the coaches; obtain rosters; sign the scorebook or give them a sportsmanship card with the names on it; inspect the game balls; meet and brief the timer/scorer, and ball runners

Just before the match:

- Dress alike, and, if possible, differently than anyone else on the pitch
- Walk on as a team
- All officials meet coaches; the Center Referee conducts overview brief
- Conduct sportsmanship talk and the coin toss

During the Match:

- Communicate during play and stoppages; ensure we get the calls right
- Work as a team
- Avoid confrontations with coaches and players

End of half or game

- Retrieve all game balls
- Meet at center of pitch
- Walk off the pitch as a team
- Avoid discussions with players, coaches, or fans
- Conference with the referee team as long as needed for discussions, follow-up, and agreement on reporting

Recommended Pregame topics:

- Discuss the division of responsibilities, teamwork, and use of whistles
- Discuss the importance of frequent and critical time eye-contact and/or any supplemental signals
- Discuss positioning and responsibilities: start of match, free kicks, offside, corner kicks, goal kick, penalty kick, throw-in, & out of touch
- Discuss the Side Referees' positioning beyond midfield
- Discuss who should monitor stopping/starting of scoreboard clock

- Identify how you will manage substitutions
- Discuss roles/actions for critical times such:
 - as when a goal is scored,
 - if there is an injury (remember if you stop the clock for an injury the player must be substituted),
 - if there is an altercation, and
 - who will do the restarts
- Clarify how you will issue verbal warnings, yellow cards, and send offs

Thanks for taking the time to read this message. And, please feel free to contact me (william.gessner@hotmail.com) if I put something in the message that you disagree with. Good luck!

Bill

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