

Greetings,

Today's message deals with taking control of the whole match. The NFHS rules are focused on what happens on the pitch. However, some other very manageable actions will help transform the game experience for everyone.

Perhaps the most significant thing you can do is arrive at the pitch at least 30 minutes before the match to conduct your pregame with the crew and the coaches. This will allow you to establish all the parameters to help control the match.

Be proactive with the coaches. Make it clear in your pregame how you expect them to communicate with you. It is much easier to control the coach-referee interactions if the parameters have been defined before the match. For example, you might say something like this, "I expect you to stay in your technical area. I will come over and explain any cautions and send-offs. I understand you may not agree with every call I make; however, I won't tolerate you yelling at me for every call that doesn't go your way."

Be vocal in what you expect during the match. Many referees are very good at letting players know what they expect, and players respond to that and play to the referee's expectations. Make an effort to communicate with the players on the pitch.

Stay calm. It raises everyone's temperature when the referee gets hot.

Finally, let's remember that one of the differences between high school soccer and other soccer matches is that we want the officials to depart after the final whistle. Have an exit strategy and leave the actual field as soon as possible (but don't be rude). However, if there is a locker room or other private place, we think a good post-game review of the match is ideal.

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.

Have a great season!

Bill

William Gessner
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