

Clock Management – late in the season games take on a greater importance as teams are vying for tournament eligibility. It becomes important for us as officials to make sure we are managing the clock as accurately as possible. The clock needs to be stopped on all of the following situations:

Goals

Injuries where medical attention is required.

Cautions or red card disqualifications.

Timeouts

Situations where you need to verbally warn a player for their actions.

Make sure your partner is ready before the re-start is initiated and the game clock is started again. You are not required to count down the seconds to the end of the game but letting players and coaches know “one minute left” can be helpful.

Mechanics – many of us late in the season may get complacent about proper signaling of calls. It is cold, maybe the game is a lopsided blowout, maybe there is a quick re-start and we are struggling to get even with the second to last defender. Making sure you make the correct signal with your arm is a vital way to communicate to players, coaches AND your partner. Use your whistle to make sure players respect the 10 yards on a free kick. And verbally communicate to players about any actions that border on fouls or misconducts. This only helps to defuse situations later in the game.

MIAA Tournament – if you are eligible for the MIAA State Tournament games make sure you read the entire section of rules for the tournament (see Rick Kiley’s email dated 10/23). You must know these rules inside and out. A two-official system is used up to the sectional semi-finals where it changes to a three-official system, similar to the USSF system. Most of the tournament games are played at night, crowds are larger and more vocal, and player and coaches are more on edge.

Make sure everyone is clear on substitution protocol, on the tie-breaking procedures, and the importance of staying in the “team/bench” area. Many coaches and team tend to creep up on the touchline during the game, obstructing your view of the touchline and preventing you from making correct calls. Correct this situation early on in the game. Some other recommendations:

- Get to the field at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start time. Do not hang out near fans or the stands, meet your partner and enter the field together.
- Check in with the site administrator and identify the ball holders working the game.
- Go over the tie-breaking procedures with each member of your crew before the game, identifying which official will administer the kicks from the penalty spot and which one will spot the keeper. Choose a goal for the PKs before the game.
- I mentioned in the email I sent on 10/19 that the state association wants officials to be consist with what uniforms they wear during the tournament. Each crew should have the same color, same sleeve lengths, black shorts, and the same black socks with three white stripes at the top (the Official Sports style with logo mid-leg is not recommended). Hats can be worn in extreme cold conditions (black only) but it should be all officials or none. Knits hats should not be worn over the ears – it is important to be able to hear the game and communication between players and also your partner.
- Once the game has ended, handshakes have been made, and your responsibilities for officiating the game are complete, leave the venue immediately. Do not hang around to watch team celebrations or warm downs.