

**COMMONWEALTH  
SOCCER OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION**

February 28, 2015

Dear Director of Student Activities/Assistant Principals,

Commonwealth Soccer Officials Association is again privileged to provide your school referees for the spring 2015 High School soccer season. We would like to take this opportunity to provide you some information that may be of use to you in preparation for the upcoming season and bring you up to speed on the important rule changes and points of emphasis from the National Federation of High Schools and the Virginia High School League. Please share this information with your coaches and players.

**2014-2015 NFHS RULE CHANGES**

- **Rule 3-3-2b (2) - If the referee stops the clock for an apparent injury to a field player or goalkeeper, the field player or goalkeeper will have to leave the field. The field player may be replaced, and the goalkeeper must be replaced.**
- **Rule 5-1-2 - The jurisdiction of the officials shall begin on their arrival at the field of play and its immediate surroundings, which shall be no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of the game.**

**POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

- **SPORTSMANSHIP – Players, coaches, game officials, and spectators must use appropriate language and refrain from insulting, offensive, and or/abusive language and gestures. Comment – Please note that ~ 40% of the red cards issued in boys games last year for this type of incident. VHSL emphasized in their soccer clinic this year that this type of behavior by both players and coaches should/will not be tolerated.**
- **COMMUNICATION – Game officials are encouraged to effectively communicate with one another as well as with players and coaches throughout the game.**
- **HANDLING CONCUSSIONS - Concussions are of increasing concern and need to be dealt with immediately. If a player may be injured due to any type of blow to head, STOP THE GAME IMMEDIATELY, and get the trainer on the field. Only let the player back into the game if the player is cleared by the trainer. Make sure that THE TRAINER PERSONNALLY VERIFIES THE PLAYER’S ABILITY TO RETURN TO THE GAME TO THE REFEREE TEAM. IF THE TRAINER SAYS THE PLAYER MAY HAVE SUFFERED A CONCUSSION THEN THEY CANNOT PLAY W/O DOCTOR’S PERMISSION. Note – Schools are required to have a concussion management policy which sets forth conditions for handing concussions and assigns responsibility on which school official(s) (trainer or doctor) have the authority to clear a player suspected of a possible concussion to return to play during that match. Comment – We will work closely with the trainer and game administrator on this issue.**
- **PENALTY KICK – Once the approach to the ball is started, the kicker’s movement may not be interrupted. A continuous forward motion throughout the approach is necessary. If continuous forward motion does not occur, the restart is a retake regardless if a goal is scored or not.**
- **Other Items of Interest**
  - **Time Keeping** – NFHS recommends that the “official time be kept on the stadium clock, however, we understand that many of you do not have “professional” timekeepers. Comment – The referee team will check with you prior to the game on the preferred method of keeping official time.

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- **Red Card Report** – If a player or coach receives a red card, you will receive an ejection report in a format suitable for submission to VHSL. I will **NOT** send a red card to VHSL without talking to you or your assistant.
- **Games tied at the end of regulation** – All regular season games tied at the end of regulation **must** play **two 5 minute** overtimes. **Comment – both a VHSL and NFHS rule.**
- **Portable Goals** – Please insure that they are anchored with either stakes or sandbags.
- **Football Goals** – Football goals cannot extend over the top of the soccer goals and supports must be a minimum of two yards behind the soccer goal, unless the goals are a combination football and soccer goal.
- **Team Benches** – NFHS recommends benches on same side of field. If benches are on opposite sides then they **must be on the diagonal** and not directly opposite one another.
- **Ball Chasers** - Minimum of two ball chasers need to be provided for all varsity games.
- **Field Markings for Turf Fields** - **Please insure that the new turf fields are properly marked to include the penalty spot, both the goal box and penalty box, the goal line between the goal posts, and the center circle. It is imperative that both the goal and penalty box lines are unbroken and clearly delineate these areas so the players and referees know exactly where they are on the field. This is especially critical on turf fields with the school names located in the football end zone areas.**
- **Eight Goal Rule** – The Eight Goal Rule per VHSL handbook will be in effect for all games. **Comment – If after the 60<sup>th</sup> minute a team achieves an eight goal lead, the game will be declared over.**
- **JV/Varsity Game Time** – If there is an issue with the JV game starting late or weather stoppage, the referee crew will coordinate with the game administrator to determine any adjustments to the JV game and the start time for the varsity game.
- **Lightning** – The referee crew should check with the game administrator prior to the start of the game to determine any potential weather issues and if someone has a lightning monitor at the game site. We will need your assistance in this matter. If the game has to be stopped for lightning/thunder, the 30 minute rule will be in effect. If it appears that the weather delay will be substantial, then we ask that the game administrator, coaches, and referee crew sort out the way ahead. Remember a completed half constitutes a completed game regardless of score.
- **Fan Conduct** – We ask that the game administrators help with maintaining good sportsmanship within the spectator area and provide assistance, if requested by the referee team with fans who conduct themselves in a less than sporting manner.

### ASSIGNOR INFORMATION

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### COMMISSIONER CONTACT

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### More on Sportsmanship

As you are well aware, the referee team grades Team Sportsmanship for both teams after every game and reports it into our master data base. Please note that the sportsmanship is graded on a 40 point average divided up into - 20 points for team; 10 points coaching staff; and 10 points for fan conduct. The standings are determined by combining the boys/girls JV and Varsity scores and then the boys/girls scores for an overall school average. Also note that red cards factor heavily into the sportsmanship awards process.

**Referee Feedback** – At our spring clinic, we made our membership aware of several coaches concerns that we expressed at the end of the last season, as well as verbal feedback during the season. We also have the opportunity for your coaches to provide written feedback on the officials. If they go to our website [www.csoaref.org](http://www.csoaref.org) and go to the forms menu, there is a form called VHSL Coaches Match Feedback Form. All they have to do is fill it out and hit submit of the bottom of the form. **Comment – we take this information very seriously and take the appropriate corrective action as warranted.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and please do not hesitate to contact me at any time via email or on my cell phone (voice or text)

V/r Pete Stenner, Commissioner CSOA