

ADVICE FOR RECENTLY CERTIFIED REFEREES

Actions that Build Respect:

Show Up Early: Arrive at the field 20-30 minutes before game time. Show everyone you are ready to go.

Introduce yourself to the coaches and fellow referees. Appear confident and look them in the eye. Offer to shake hands (firmly please) but don't react if someone doesn't respond.

Walk with a purpose. Don't appear to wander aimlessly. Walk directly to the goals and inspect them. Check the field markings for distance, etc., and the field for safety.

Appearance for Respect:

Dress neatly. Look as professional as possible. (Don't worry that some adults don't.) Wear the official referee uniform, socks up, shirt tucked.

Good Posture. Don't slouch, look as tall as possible. Wear shorts that stop above the knee and socks that stop below the knees, fold tops properly; not sloppily.

Run or jog when appropriate.

No earrings or other jewelry. For all the reasons a player isn't allowed to wear them, neither should you.

Avoid sunglasses. They are dangerous to you and the players. Plus, those to whom you speak can't see your eyes and expressions. Caps with a brim are OK unless being assessed. Head bands pulled down close to the eye brows can act like a visor when the sun is at a low angle.

Speech for Respect:

Use Precise Vocabulary. "Start of the game" rather than "Kick-off", "Goal Area" and "Penalty Area" rather than "Box".

Voice Modulation. Practice saying "Good morning coach. I'm the referee for this game. Try not to let your voice squeak. Speak up. Practice makes perfect.

Sound Authoritative. Practice saying things like, "It's your throw-in . . . Let's Go . . . Coach, you can either ref or coach today, but you can't do both."

Game Situations:

Keep up with play. Try to keep within seven to twenty yards of play.

Be in the best position to see the play but not in the way of play. When a ball hits or nearly hits you, smile and forget it, but realize you may be too close to the play. Remember that the referee is considered “part of the field”.

Move quickly to breakup potential flare-ups between players. Your close presence will quiet a lot of nerves.

Be firm when penalizing players. If appropriate, record the player’s number, show the red or yellow card and move away from him/her. Practice showing cards. Hold it directly over your own head; not the offender’s head. Remember that he/she is already embarrassed, and holding the card over his/her head might incite further unpleasantness.

If asked a question by a player or coach, give a short, quick answer, turn and move away quickly.

Game Control:

Be sure that coaches know he/she is responsible for the actions and words of the players and spectators, and that he/she needs to control their behavior if inappropriate. (Don’t bring this up routinely – you don’t want to appear to be expecting a problem. Only bring it up when incidents that need to be controlled start to occur.) If unable to control, the discipline for the spectators is applied to the coach. If the coach is sent off, he must leave the field and area surrounding the field (out of sight, out of sound) and an assistant coach must assume responsibility for the coaching duties. If a disturbance continues, suspend the game. Upon suspending the game, immediately move away from the offenders. Report the situation in writing to the league or tournament authorities, and they will decide whether to forfeit or replay the game, etc. Forward the offending player’s or coach’s pass to the league or tournament authorities. Follow the USSF or league reporting procedures.

Remember, your closeness to the play is the best way to control players. It’s real difficult to argue with someone standing close to you who probably had a clear view of what happened. Your attitude during the first ten minutes of each half is important to game control.