

**COMMONWEALTH
SOCCER OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION**

January 31, 2020

Dear Director of Student Activities/Assistant Principals,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of our Board and President (Dick Cote), CSOA would like to thank you for your support during the past season. From the outset in March through the playoffs/state championships, the consistent positive dialog with the association allowed us to get your games covered with a minimum amount of turbulence and quickly adjudicate issues that came up during the games such as sportsmanship and referee performance. Our success can be attributed to our “team” effort/solid working relationship that we have with you. We are currently preparing for the spring season and would like to share several areas that we solicit your assistance/input:

First – Assignor – Miles has retired as our primary assigner and has been replaced by Dena Morrison. Dena did our fall assigning and is the primary POC for the spring. Her information is below:

- **CSOA (Basic) - 703-346-6820 - Use for any additional information about assignments**
- **CSOA Primary CELL – 703-357-7921 –**
- **E-mail - csoaassignor@gmail.com**
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Second - Referee Training – Our annual training clinic is on **Saturday February 8th** at Saint John Paul the Great HS in Dumfries starting at 8:00 AM. This will be a full day of training to include rule changes, points of emphasis from NFHS, and lessons learned from last year. **The mandatory VHSL coaches’ clinic will be online this year. Information on the clinic should be available on the VHSL website starting February 3rd.**

Third – Referee Performance – An important part of referee development is feedback and mentoring. We believe that both yourselves and the coaches are important partners in providing feedback. We would like to encourage your coaches to use our referee feedback system which can be accessed online at (www.csoaref.org). The link for the **Coach’s Feedback Form** is located on the left side of the home page. . These forms come directly to me and to our VP for Assessments (referee mentoring coordinator), where they are reviewed, and appropriate action is then taken. We truly appreciate your help in our efforts to make our officials better. For your information we will send out mentors and assessors to different venues during the season to evaluate our referee crew’s performance.

Fourth – Red Cards – Below is a chart of the red cards for last year. Cards were down from 2018 (103). The area that we need your immediate help with is **Foul/Abusive Language towards officials and opponents**. We all agree that this behavior is inappropriate and unacceptable in any event but most especially in interscholastic sports. The other category included **5** Coach ejections for Dissent and **11** for fighting. 64% of the red cards were for boy’s varsity and 22% for boy’s junior varsity.

	DY	FAL Off	FAL Opp	SFP DOGSO	SFP	VC	Taunting	Other	Total
BV	15	6	4	4	5	3	2	10	49
BJV	6	3	0	3	0	2	0	3	17
GV	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	10
GJV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	26	9	4	8	5	5	2	17	76

DY – Double Yellow FAL – Foul & Abuse Language SFP-Serious Foul Play VC-Violent Conduct

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- VHSL Ejection Policies (VHSL Handbook 27-11-6)
 - Normal Ejection – one game
 - Fighting – three games
 - Foul/Abusive Language directed at game official – two games
 - Leave Bench to become involved in an altercation – two games

Fifth – Coach/Bench Conduct – Occasionally, issues arise with coaches and bench conduct. If this becomes an issue the officials will address the issue with the coach and if necessary sanction the appropriate individuals causing the issue. In the cases involving the coaches, they should expect to receive a yellow card warning for unsporting conduct. They need to understand that, if they persist in unsporting conduct, they could then be dismissed from the match (second yellow card). The only exception to this would be if the initial unsporting conduct incident involves the use of foul and/or abusive language towards an official in which the coach can expect to be ejected (would receive a red card directly). **Note - NFHS Rule 5-3 states that game officials shall communicate the nature of misconduct to coaches, the scorer and other officials when a yellow/red card has been issued. This communication is a notification and not an explanation. It is not intended to be an opportunity for the coach to discuss or dissent the call.**

Sixth – Pre-game communication between the school administration and game officials:
2020 NFHS POE. An authorized representative of the host school shall greet the officials upon their arrival. The host school principal, principal's designee or game administrator must indicate to the head official or center referee his/her location should a situation develop where his/her assistance is needed during a contest. The contest coaches should not serve as the principal's designee or game administrator. The expectation is that the principal's designee or game administrator will take positive action to maintain an atmosphere of good sportsmanship within the spectator seating area.

Seventh – School Feedback – The CSOA Commissioner will be your main point of contact on any issues that arise during the game. I will provide you any feedback that we get from the referee game reports (i.e. field player, coach, spectator issues, etc.) I will send you a red card report that you can use as a basis for your report to VHSL. I am happy to discuss the cards with you and will be the Association POC for any appeals. Of course, please let me know if there is an issue with one of our officials.

Eighth – Other Items of Interest

- **Time Keeping** – VHSL mandates that official time be kept on the field by the officials. If running time is being kept on the stadium clock, the clock will stop at two minutes.
- **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 (recommend 4)
- **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. *Comment – Understand that this is a problem with many of the turf fields. Referees have been instructed to handle this situation like the combination soccer/football goal post – i.e. ball will be declared out of bounds if it hits the football goal post.)*
- **Team Benches** – NFHS recommends benches on same side of field. If benches are on opposite sides then they **must be on a diagonal** and not directly opposite one another. *Comment – Schools may prefer benches on opposite sides of field for control purposes. This is not a problem; the only requirement is that the benches be on the opposite diagonal from each other. We also strongly suggest that they be on the opposite side of the halfway line from where the Assistant Referee (AR) normally runs along the touchline.*

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- **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.
- **Team Areas** – **NFHS now requires the team areas to be marked to remind coaches and players where they should remain during the game. This is basically a 20-yard area in front of the bench.** **Comment - If you do not want to mark the field, then cones would be an acceptable alternative, if they are far enough off the line for safety of the referee team when moving up and down the line. (This area should extend from the half-way line 20 yards towards the goal line).**
- **Captain's Band** – **Captain's bands MUST be worn on the arm. They can no longer be worn on the leg.**
- **Eight Goal Rule** – The Eight Goal Rule per VHSL handbook will be in effect for all games. **Comment – If after the 60th minute a team achieves an eight-goal lead, the game will be declared over. Districts must notify VHSL if there is a district exception to this rule. This rule also applies for junior varsity games. For Fairfax the game will be stopped in the 54th minute; for all others the cutoff will be the 45th minute.**
- **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. **Comment – We would appreciate your assistance in this matter, especially with monitoring incoming storms. Trainers may have a weather APT on their phones..**
- **Face Masks** – We had an issue with a player wearing a face mask last year. Face masks are permissible, if prescribed by a doctor. **Comment – Player MUST have a Doctor's note present at the game site to be able to play with the mask.**
- **Post-Game Sportsmanship Handshake** – **VHSL has directed that the referees will NO LONGER participate in the post-game handshake with the teams and coaches and the referees have been instructed to expeditiously leave the venue. Breaking this time-honored tradition has been mandated by VHSL based on an Executive Committee Decision.**

Finally, Dick Cote (CSOA President), Dena (Assignor), and I again thank you and your staff for the tremendous support this past year and look forward to making 2020 even better. Please feel free to contact Dena or myself at any time you have an issue or a question.

ASSIGNOR INFORMATION

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COMMISSIONER CONTACT

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V/r Pete Stenner, Commissioner CSOA
Pete