

# Sacramento Youth Soccer League



To: SYSL Coaches  
From: Ed Foster, SYSL Head Referee  
Subject: "The game is for the players, PLEASE"  
Date: 2009 - 2010 Season

*As we approach the upcoming Soccer (Fútbol) season please consider thoughts for youth soccer.*

Your Sacramento Youth Soccer League (SYSL) serves over 8,000 youth recreational soccer players. Each year during the summer months SYSL makes available Referee certification clinics to enable interested individuals to gain rudimentary working knowledge of the "Laws of the Game" in order to help as entry-level referees during your 10 game Recreational season. Please understand that whether you arrive at your home field or away as a visitor for your games, the Referee(s) assigned to your game may have about as much experience refereeing as your young players have in playing the game. Those Referees who are certified have attended an intense 16 hour course of instruction on the "Laws of the Game" and they have passed the final exam leading them to the initial grade **8** certification. But, until they have experienced the first 100 games they will be on a steep learning curve continuing to improve their refereeing skills just as your players are doing the same with their soccer skills.

Our area pool of Referees is small compared to the games we have, therefore the more experienced Referees will be doing higher-level games (Comp. & Metro, etc). As Coaches, I encourage you to focus on your players & learn the *protocols of this great game*. For example, with the game in progress you must ask the Referee's permission to step on the playing field to aid your injured player (if the coach enters the field the injured player **MUST** be replaced).

You, the Coach, are responsible for controlling the behavior of your parents & fans on your sideline. No one should be yelling at the Referees. While you may certainly disagree with a call that is made on the field of play, yelling at a Referee will not change their call that they view from a perspective and a position on the field that is different from yours. It is so easy to see things from the sideline when you are standing and have a different angle than the referee. If "you" say anything negative it only confuses or frustrates the players, parents and the referee. That causes problems. If anyone speaks to a referee about the game "for the sake of the game" it must be you, the coach, **NOT THE PARENTS**, it is your job to stop any negative behavior.

We all want our children to be safe while playing but remember this is a physical game, contact is made without fouls. We want to protect our kids of course, just think about what you say "if it is loud and in anger" very few people listen to that. We tell our Referees "the game belongs to the players". Please remember that before you speak.

During past seasons we had too many Coaches "sent off" (Red Card's). When a Coach receives a send-off, the game ends immediately therefore, you have just taken the game away from your players. At the recreational level any Coach receiving a "Send Off" for any reason is unacceptable. *The game belongs to the players.*

We lose so many referees yearly because of what is being said to them by parents and coaches. It takes years for a referee to have experience or to be a "great referee". Help your team by encouraging the referees in a positive way, offer them water to drink and find something good to say to them.

What can you do to help the referees:

- Look them in the eye and tell them thank you, let them know that they are needed and respected.
- Send some of your parents and your assistant coach to an entry level referee class and have them become licensed referees. That will help in understanding why referees do the things they do.
- It will also help build a stronger adult referee program for SYSL.

If you have a problem(s) with a referee write a letter to your Club's Head Referee. Leave out any personal items and talk about ways that would improve the referee not destroy the link between coaches and referees. Be positive and proactive in building a better program for the leaders of tomorrow.

*Thank you for all the positive things you do for your players and the game.*