



Role of the Referee in Youth Soccer

Often, as we introduce refs onto the fields of our youngest players, there is confusion regarding the collective expectations and roles of players, coaches and refs. It is our hope that this document will serve to clarify a few details for all.

It is important to note, that refs are in place at our youngest House games as much for their own development as for that of our young players. Everyone has to gain their experience somewhere, and our goal is to provide a competitive but friendly environment for that development. Let's teach our children to respect the refs and the finality of the decisions they make, no matter what the age group, just as we expect referees to respect the leveled development of our young soccer players. And do remember, someday, the 13 year old controlling the game of young children who can't quite remember which is the net they want to score on, could very well be your child in another 5 or 6 years. We are one club, who has the tremendous opportunity and obligation to develop each of the members within. This is completely achievable with a little patience and understanding.

1. Jewelry Policy:

*There are 17 Laws in soccer, sanctioned by FIFA, the International governing body. Below is an extract from **Law 4 – The Player's Equipment**, as it pertains to Jewelry .*

All items of jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) are strictly forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewelry is not acceptable. The players are to be inspected before the match begins and substitutes before they enter the field of play. If a player is discovered to be wearing unauthorized clothing or jewelry during play, the referee must:

- **inform the player that the item in question must be removed**
- **order the player to leave the field of play at the next stoppage if he is unable or unwilling to comply**
- **caution the player if he willfully refuses to comply or, having been told to remove the item, is discovered to be wearing the item again**

2. Age level Expectations:

2nd Grade – At this age, coaches are asked to remain off of the field for the duration of the game without exception. The ref's role is limited to a developmentally appropriate one, with primary duties including, but not excluded to, safety check-in, calling throw-ins, goal and corner kicks. The ref will typically CORRECT the child and give them a second chance before turning over possession.

3rd/4th Grade – This age group adds another level of complexity, with the introduction of direct free kicks for blatant fouls, the off-side rule, and penalty kicks. In addition, second chances will be permitted while teaching the proper procedure for throw-ins and teachable moments used to introduce and explain indirect free kicks. These basic rules are fundamental in getting your child to learn to play within the spirit of the game and become equipped to advance to the next level should they choose to do so.

5th/6th Grade – At this age, calls are more in-line with those made at the Travel level. Second chances are rarely offered for throw-ins if the correct procedure is not followed. All direct and indirect kicks are called as are off-sides and penalties. At the referees discretion, teachable moments may be used e.g. if a player is committing unintentional fouls or drop-ball scenarios.

7th/8th Grade/HS/Travel – From 7th grade and up, all rules of the game are applied as mandated by FIFA, the governing body of soccer.