

From: Rick Dean, Referee Assignor for PAGES & DELCO
To: Club Representatives, Coaches, and Parents

Sept 20, 2009

Subj: Travel Soccer Referees for 2009 Fall Season

I'll try to keep this short. My goal as your Referee Assignor is 100% coverage for referees for all of your club home games, plus the development of the young soccer referees.

A few years ago, there were tremendous problems with getting adequate qualified travel soccer referees for this area. Part of that has to do with hostility towards referees by coaches and parents on the sidelines, and the unwillingness of young referees (high school players) to want to deal with that abuse. Younger referees who are not yet seasoned are not going to get every call right. When they are being yelled at constantly, they end up making calls- or reversing calls- based on inputs from the sidelines. This leads to increased criticism from the other sideline, and emboldens coaches and parents to criticize more harshly. The end result in some games has been that one questionable call early in the game can cause an inexperienced referee to lose confidence, "put his tail between his legs," and just pray to make it to the end of the game. Several bad experiences like this have caused many young referees to quit. Every time we lose a referee, it makes the problem worse. I'd like to put an end to this abuse of our young referees.

We have come a long way in the last 5 years of building a very good pool of young, qualified referees. Last year we, as a group, did a good job of protecting them from this abuse so that they could gain experience. We seem to have taken a step back in the first 2 weeks of 2009. I'd like to ask for your cooperation and assistance in getting control of this situation.

Actions for Club Reps, Coaches, Parents

- (a) Educate coaches and parents on the problem, and ask for their patience, and their help in controlling parents and coaches. With new referees, they are going to make some bad calls. Hopefully the AR's will help keep these to a minimum.
- (b) It is the coach's responsibility to control your team's parents during the games.
- (c) Provide your feedback for the referees by using the on-line reporting feature – not by talking/yelling at the referees during or after the game.
- (d) If there is a severe or persistent problem with a referee, please contact me. I would prefer an e-mail to document the situation more thoroughly, but I welcome your phone calls as well.

Actions for Referees:

- (a) Establish control of the game early, and do not hesitate eject people on the team bench and parents when warranted.

If we all work together, we can continue to improve the referee situation. I would welcome any feedback or suggestions you have. Best of luck in the fall season. Thank you.

Rick Dean
Referee Assignor PAGES & DELCO