I hope you’ve had a great start to your season too!

In this edition of our Officiating Bulletin, the focus is on a few odds and ends; several topics (hopefully) of interest. These are situations that I have witnessed or that have been brought to my attention. Please feel free to respond with your thoughts as well as additional situations of possible interest to others.

Thanks

#1: Plastic inserts are jewelry!

Apparently, some ear piercing business owners may be selling & promoting plastic ear studs (to keep a new piercing from closing up) as acceptable for high school sports. Those items, just like the rubber live strong or other bracelets, hair scrunchies worn on the wrist, friendship bracelets, etc. are not a part of the uniform. Therefore, these are considered to be jewelry and not permitted in Field Hockey and most other OHSAA/NFHS sports. I’ve been advised to think of it this way: If the player was not born with it, it is not a component of the team’s uniform, or it is not a piece of required equipment, it’s probably jewelry. -- I have been assured by many that the hole created by this piercing will not close up in one hour’s time.

According to Rule 1.5.1.5 (page 11), “Jewelry shall not be worn except for religious or medical medals. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert bracelet must be taped and may be visible.” Note: Religious medals may not be worn on a neck chain and then be taped to the body as that chain is not permitted.

The discovery of a player wearing jewelry results in the assessment of a misconduct penalty (using the card progression) to the head coach.
#2: Lightning and Thunder

Appendix E (page 96) of our rule book provides “NFHS Guidelines on Handling Practices and Contests during Lightning and Thunder Disturbances.” This section is included in all OHSAA/NFHS sport rule books. It talks about the 30 minute rule and must be enforced by officials without hesitation.

There are no real issues here, but I was asked, “So, what happens next [during the regular season]?” “Here’s what we did when we heard the thunder: My partner and I stopped play and advised the coaches to take their teams to the closest shelter. I marked the time shown on the clock in the scorebook and marked it in my own notes (along with the score, possession, and location of the ball). Then we also went to shelter. I knew that we could not allow players to return to the field for 30 minutes from that time. - Along the way, there was another clap of thunder, so I marked the current time and restarted the thirty minutes. - This happened several more times and we were headed toward sunset on a field without lights. We (my partner and I) had to pull out our rulebooks, just to be sure since we had already started the second half. - Shortly after, the two coaches approached us and asked that we suspend play for the day. We waited a bit longer and discussed the options. Then, we called the coaches together and indicated that the game would be considered a complete game.” “Were we correct?”

ABSOLUTELY!!!

The Sport Specific Rule is Rule 4.1.2 (page 31) which states “Games interrupted or suspended because of circumstances beyond the control of the responsible [school] administrator (i.e., weather, darkness, natural disaster, etc.) shall be resumed at the point of interruption if play is stopped prior to the completion of the first half. If play is stopped after completion of the first half, the game is considered a complete game.

All: Please remember that we are in a season where thunderstorms are common throughout much of the state. Not only did this official ensure player safety, she managed the situation extremely well. Marking down the time, possession, and location of the ball in the book would have been essential had play resumed on that or a future date. However, since play could not be resumed on that day, and since the 1st half had been completed, the information was not used.


Item 3: Unsolicited Officiating Advice

I learned a long time ago, in my officiating career that many people are more than willing to share their expertise with new officials as well as those experienced officials who are willing to listen. That does not make them experts on the subject!
It has come to my attention that at least one non-OHSAA Field Hockey Official has taken it upon himself to distribute emails relating his observations on the performance of some of our OHSAA Officials... While the intent of these notifications is probably for the betterment of his audience, the advice provided was unsolicited and has included FIH Rule references that do not apply to OUR GAME. While we should all strive to improve, please try to not allow these comments or correspondences to influence you and the game that you call. We have a system in place to help each of us and our only concern here is OHSAA Rules and OHSAA Mechanics.

The three geographic areas of Ohio where interscholastic field hockey is played each have (or will soon have) a local association. Each association has Officers and a Rules Interpreter; someone who can advise you should you have a question or concern (and you can also contact me, as State Rules Interpreter, with your questions) about OHSAA rules or OHSAA Mechanics. In addition, I have a team of Field Hockey Observers who have agreed to share their experience and talent on specific (and non-specific) game assignments. What you do with that advice is clearly your choice, but please understand that our observer team is truly knowledgeable.

I learned a long time ago that I’m happy to listen to advice from those who can help me. However, I am probably the best judge of who can help me... As a young basketball official, I used to come into the locker room at halftime of the JV game, only to be lectured by the evening’s varsity officials who watched me for maybe 10 minutes. The advice that I received on one night, was frequently quite different from the advice received on another night. I respected the opinions of some, but not of others. - Everyone has an opinion; I am the best judge of who can best help me and the same goes for each of you.

There is an excellent article in this month’s Referee Magazine (October 2015), written by George Hammond (a veteran official from New York), entitled “Filter Advice” that officials may find interesting. It’s his take on how to effectively give and take officiating advice. Unfortunately, copyright laws prohibit me from sharing the article and I am unable to find a link to it for the time being.

As always, your ideas and suggestions are welcome and will be considered (and presented anonymously) for inclusion in subsequent Field Hockey Bulletins!

*Keep up the good work!*

Rick