

### Pre-Game

- Arrive 20 minutes before game time. We can't say this enough.
- Look professional. Coaches, parents and players are going to decide how good you're going to be by your appearance. Tuck in your referee jerseys. If you don't have a second color referee jersey, you might want to have a different color pinney or a t-shirt available. There are always yellow teams and Spring 2010 there are two yellow U8 teams. Some of the smaller referees blend right in with the taller U8 players. If you have longer hair, restrain it. Make sure your black socks are pulled all the way up and secure your shoelaces. If your watch or stopwatch is already giving you trouble, replace it. Using a cell phone for time is a bad idea; it could slip out of your pocket or sustain weather damage. If your whistle is not effective, replace it. A black baseball hat is ok but no sunglasses unless they're prescription.
- Secure, straighten and re-stake (if necessary) the Pugg Goals. We don't want them coming loose in a game. Also, make sure that black strap on the bottom is laying flat on the field and does not slide up on of the sides; readjust that strap during the game if you have to – it just takes a second because if the strap is off the ground, it's going to stop the ball from entering the goal.
- Walk around the field and remove loose debris, like plastic water bottle caps, from the field. If you ever notice anything wrong with the field, contact Tracy.
- Walk in the lane between the two fields and make sure all water bottles, jackets ... etc are set back from the line.
- Walk all around the field and make sure spectators are seated a couple feet from the line for everyone's safety and to allow room for throw-ins.
- Politely remind any parents or spectators to move to the ends of the field - not too close to the Pugg goals and not sitting right by the corners because they'll get in the way of a corner kick. They can also sit the far side because the middle lane is reserved for the coaches and players. A parent may wander in with water or if their child is hurt or to take a picture but don't let them set up camp there. Politely ask them to move between quarters or at halftime.
- Either whistle or inform the coaches that you are ready to check the players in.
- Make sure every player gets checked in properly:
  - Check cleats (tennis shoes are A-OK too)
  - Encourage secure, double-tied shoelaces – point out loose laces to the coach; sometimes, players lose cleats during the game and everyone laughs but if the loose cleat injures a player, it won't be funny.
  - Make sure they're wearing shin guards and socks cover the guards.
  - All jerseys tucked in; jackets underneath jerseys
  - Hoodies and anything dangly e.g. drawstrings and glasses restraints tucked in the neck of the jersey
  - No jewelry, including taped ears. Keep in mind there are a couple U8s who have to wear medical alert bracelets (wristbands/all day ride passes for fairs and carnivals are ok)
  - No plastic or metal barrettes or hard headbands
  - Longer braided hair that has beads on the end must be restrained
  - Make sure any casts or splints are securely wrapped with some kind of foam or bandage

- Ask players and coaches if they have any questions; if you don't know the answer, tell them you'll find out and let them know.
- Expect the unexpected. One team might only have 8 players show up by game time. Together with both coaches and the other referee, decide how to handle this situation. You could either start with 2 games of 4 v 4 and run 10 minute quarters or start playing on just 1 field with 5 v 5. Odds are, more kids will arrive, but sometimes the coaches know they're going to be short. If you end up just playing on one field, rotate working quarters with the other referee. If it's a really hot day and there are no subs, you might all decide to either take a really quick water break halfway thru the quarter or run shorter quarters. We don't want our little U8 players, or their parents, to suffer; we want them to have fun so sometimes we have to bend the rules to accommodate unusual circumstances.
- Check game balls (LAYSLE red or green striped balls unless none available) for proper air; add or remove air, as needed. Keep the game ball with you until start of game and remove it from the field at the end of each quarter so you know exactly where it is at all times.
- Communicate with the other referee so you know which field you're going to work, who is going to keep official game time and which team will get kick-off.
- Take the field at least two minutes before game time and blow the whistle short and hard a couple times so they know you mean business; it normally takes the coaches a couple minutes to divide and position the kids not to mention exiting the field. Don't hesitate to nicely remind a coach to leave the field so you can start the game.
- Make sure the other referee is ready on his/her field and start the quarter together.
- In the event the other referee doesn't show up, contact Tracy. If this happens, ask one of the head coaches to volunteer or to find a volunteer to handle one of the fields while you work the other. Switch fields every quarter or at halftime so both fields get a "real" referee.

**Again, arrive 20 minutes before game time so you allow enough time for all of the above!**

#### At Kick-Off

- Count players and make sure they are on the correct side of the field.
- Both fields should be set up the same way e.g. green on one side and white on the other.
- Make sure the receiving team is not standing in the center circle.
- Check to make sure the other referee & field is ready to start.
- Blow your whistle to signal kick-off.
- Make sure the player taking the kick doesn't touch the ball a second time before it comes in contact with another player. If there's a double touch, the opposing team gets a free kick.
- The ball has to go forward or you must blow your whistle for a re-kick.

### During the Game

- Stay with the play as much as possible. You cannot tell if a ball is in or out of play if you are on the opposite side of the field.
- When a ball goes out of bounds, 99% of the time, the players will chase it down. Your job is not to chase down every ball that's out of play; it's to use your arm signals to show who's going to have possession of the ball and make sure the ball is restarted at the proper place.
- Allow 3 tries for a proper throw-in; make sure the player taking the throw in has enough space. You may have to move players, coaches or water bottles.
  - Watch foot position - not totally across the line – and adjust, if needed.
  - Make sure they draw both hands back over their head before they release the ball
  - Make sure they do not jump, walk or lift up their back foot
  - If any of these things are not correct, blow the whistle. Tell them what they did wrong and retake the throw-in. Do NOT feel sorry for them and allow a bad throw-in. So far, all the players have managed it get it right the third time. You need to get it right too.
- Whenever possible, on a free kick, position yourself close to where you think the ball may land. You don't want to catch yourself chasing behind play, if you can avoid it.
- On any free kick – foul, goal kick, corner kick - make sure the opposing team is at least 6 feet away from the player taking the kick.
- Whenever you blow your whistle – sharply – for a foul, immediately use your arm to signal which way the ball is going to be kicked. This is very important to the U8 coaches because they are looking for your arm signal so they can instruct their team to move forward or back. Also, explain the foul call to the players.
- At any stoppage of play, always lift up your head and look to see if the coaches want to sub. Encourage the coaches to yell, "Sub!" so you recognize that they're making a change.
- Breathe! This is a great time to compose yourself.
- When the coaches sub on the fly, make sure the player exiting the field makes it almost all the way to the arc before the coach allows the sub to enter the field. Don't hesitate to correct the coach if they're sending the player in too early. You don't have to actually stop the game to do this unless it's really an issue; just mention it to them when you get a chance.
- Blow your whistle sharply twice for the end of a quarter and 3 times for the end of the game. When starting the next quarter, give your whistle a sharp blow twice again – with about 30 seconds left of their break - and walk to the center of the field with the ball so they know you mean business. This will give the coaches time to get their teams back out on the field. If the coaches are taking too much time, you can certainly say, "Let's go, coach!"
- Feel free to switch fields at halftime with the other referee. Often times, you get to experience two totally different games. Make sure and talk to each other about players to watch and any other information that might be helpful to them.

### The Arc by the Goal

- It is extremely important that you are right on top of play anytime the ball and players are near one of the goals. No contact with the ball is permitted in the arc. A player cannot stand in the arc and contact the ball, even if it's just outside the arc.
- If an attacker contacts the ball within the arc, blow the whistle. Defense is awarded a goal kick. Again, make sure the attackers are positioned back (6 feet) on a goal kick so they can't shoot the ball right back in the goal.
- If a defender contacts the ball within the arc, blow the whistle. Offense is awarded a penalty kick. Walk 6 big steps from the top of the arc, place the ball on the ground, identify the player who will take the kick, make sure all the other players are behind the player taking the kick, blow your whistle (you can always say, "On my whistle") and let the penalty kick proceed. Once the ball is touched, it's live.
- If the ball just comes to a standstill in the arc, defense is always awarded a goal kick.
- If a player runs thru the arc without the ball, no call is made. It's a good idea to remind them to stay out of the arc, though.

### Other things that may occur during the game

U8 players fall down a lot. They trip over the ball, they trip while they're running... always a good idea to ask them if they're okay just in case you have to blow the whistle so the coach can come on the field and sub them out. Remember, though, they're a lot tougher than they look so make sure they're really hurt before you stop the game. Generally, if they're crying, you blow the whistle immediately. If you have to restart the game, use a drop ball. One player from each team will be selected by the coach or will take charge. Sometimes a bunch of them will gather round but move the others back. Never drop the ball right by the goal; move away at least 6 feet or so. Make sure the ball touches the ground before the players kick it or retake it. Some of the coaches think a drop ball situation is dangerous and that's probably because too many players involve themselves in it. Just allow two and explain that the ball has to touch the ground before they can start kicking and it will be A-OK.

Sometimes a U8 player will randomly leave the field. It happens. Let the coach know what's going on and just keep playing. The coach will either send in another player or the player that left will come back on.

Often times, the coaches get carried away and forget that they're not supposed to be on the field. Firmly yet politely, instruct the coach to move off the field.

Sometimes, you blow your whistle to stop play and play doesn't stop. That's because you're not blowing your whistle loud enough. If you blow it really loud, they will stop. You must blow the whistle hard. Just because you and the players right by you can hear the whistle doesn't mean all the players on the field and the coaches can hear it. You're not being rude by blowing loudly and you're not going to scare anyone. This is why you have a whistle in the first place. USE IT. We've never heard a coach say that a referee blows his/her whistle too loudly but we always hear the opposite. If you're not sure you're blowing loud enough, you're probably not. You might also want to ask one of the coaches between quarters how you're doing with the whistle. Remember, U8 games can be very noisy. When the weather is nice, lots of relatives come to watch U8s play and they cheer a lot. Your whistle must be loud enough to get everyone's attention!

If there's a problem between the players, you need to talk to the coach between quarters. There was a situation where two players were really getting mad at each other and the referee was concerned that they might actually get into a fight during the game. So, at halftime, the referee told both coaches what was going on and who the offenders were. The coaches were happy that was brought to their attention and put the players on separate fields for the rest of the game.

If a player consistently fouls, you need to make sure the coach is aware of what he/she keeps doing wrong. At U8 games, there's always a Head coach and an assistant coach or a parent assigned to each field. Inform the head coach so he/she can work to correct the problem at practice. Some teams have the same person helping the head coach every game and others have different people. It's best to talk to the head coach if you ever have any problems, even if it's with the assistant coach or the person helping.

Sometimes one team is really dominant and scoring all the goals. Do not allow the coach of the losing team to put on any additional players in a U8 game. The U8 Director would suggest that the high scoring team either has his star players pass the ball to a weaker teammate, dribble/shoot with their weak foot or take one of their players off the field. It's also okay if they want to switch players from field to field in an attempt to even things out. Also, only in U8s, if a game is really one-sided and the losing team has a ball sitting right on the goal line by the Pugg but hasn't entirely crossed the line, award them the goal. We don't keep track of scores in the U8 division and it means everything to the losing team.

Only call hand balls when the players' hands or arms are totally where they're not supposed to be and their hand or arm contacts the ball first. Keep in mind: did the ball hit the hand or did the hand hit the ball? There's a difference. If the ball contacts their hand or arm, they might freeze and look at you with big eyes or everyone will shout "Hand ball" but that may not be the case. You're in charge. Either blow the whistle, signal the direction of the kick with your arm or say "Play on" or "Keep going."

If anyone sees lightning, stop the game for 20 minutes and take shelter. During that time, if there's more lightning, you have to wait another 20 minutes. If it's really bad out, just call the game. If there is thunder, pause the game, take shelter and wait for 15

minutes. Dependent on the conditions, either re-start or call the game. Only the referee can call the game.

CALL TRACY (248) 672-5451 IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS AND ENJOY YOURSELF!!!  
U8s ARE ALL ABOUT HAVING FUN AND MAKING SURE PLAYERS STAY SAFE AND START  
LEARNING SOME OF THE BASIC RULES OF SOCCER.