This is a youth soccer referee manual that provides referees the information they need to learn and understand the rules of soccer that the Oswegoland Park District enforces.
The official should maintain a non-bias control of the game. The idea is to gain respect of all involved in the contest.

- Accept criticism and praise in the same manner and never hesitate to ask for assistance
- Be courteous and professional at all times
- Be a good listener, teacher and be able to make strong, quick decisions and act accordingly when dealing with emotional matters
- Know the fundamental rules of the game and understand your role as an official
- Trust your partner and put fun, fairness and safety first
- Be a positive role model
- Be happy to be at work (don’t appear bored or disinterested)

**Officials Code of Ethics**

You should........

- Know both the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules and should exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner
- Conduct yourself in a sportsmanlike fashion in all interactions with athletes, parents, coaches and staff
- Prepare yourself both physically and mentally (dress code, whistle, rules, etc)
- Remain mindful that your conduct influences the respect that players, coaches, and the public hold for the entire organization
- While enforcing the rules of the play, remain aware of the inherent risk of injury that competition poses to players
- When appropriate, report incidents to Athletic staff (incident reports completed)

**General Duties for the Officials**

- Arrive at the game site no later than 15 minutes early
- Bring your own whistle and follow dress code
- Use provided stop watches and not cell phones to keep time
- Introduce yourself to the coaches
- Review & discuss with partner & coaches supplemental rules for age group
- Ensure players are wearing proper equipment (no hard casts, jewelry, pants with belt loops)
- Player and site safety check
- Ensure players are warming up opposite their bench
- Select game ball that has proper air
- Start the game on time!!!
Diagonal Referee System

- The ref on the coaches’ sideline always keeps time on their stopwatch.
- Run a diagonal referee system
- Before the game the referees consult on which side of the field they want to have as “their” side.
- A referee, on majority, will stay on their side of the field. They will follow the play all the way to the goal line. When the play goes to the other side of the field then the referee will come up and be in line with the last defender of the team or midfield. From here the referee can use their discretion on which angle that would be best to help see the play.
- Essentially the area that the referee will cover will be from the goal line transitioning to the last defender or midfield.

Making a call

- Blow whistle loud and approach the play.
- Run to where the foul occurred. While running put hand up. When you get to the spot of the foul make the appropriate hand signal.
- Reward the appropriate kick. (Direct, indirect, or penalty kick)
- Blow whistle loud to signal the resume of game play.

Injuries

- Always stop play at sign of injury.
- Stop stopwatch as well. (Only time stopwatch will be stopped).
- Notify site supervisor.
- To resume game do a “drop ball.” This is when you have two players stand on their sides of the field and you drop the ball in the middle and play.
The ball becomes dead when:

- A goal is scored.
- A foul occurs.
- The ball goes out of bounds.
  - The sideline in soccer is called the “touchline.”
  - The end line in soccer is called the “goal-line.”

Player Substitutions

- Substitutions occur on request from the coach during a dead ball situation.

Keeping Track of Time

- Only stop time on injuries.
- Don’t stop the game exactly at the 25 or 30 minute time mark. If a team is about to score let them play until possession is lost or the opportunity is. (Don’t have it go too long though).
Throw-Ins

A throw-in is awarded when the ball last touched a member of the opposing team before the entire ball passes beyond the touchline either in the air or on the ground.

- For the ball to be out of play, the entire ball must have crossed completely over the touchline.

A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in.

- If an untouched (by either team) throw-in goes into the opponent’s goal, a goal kick will be awarded to the opponent of the thrower.
- If an untouched throw-in, goes into the throwing team’s goal, a corner kick will be awarded to the opponents.
- Often a throw-in towards an opponent’s goal goes into a group of players that surround the goal. It is important to watch for touching of the ball, because if the ball goes into the goal untouched, no goal is scored.

A goalkeeper shall not touch the ball with his/her hands when receiving it directly from a throw-in by a teammate.

The ball shall be thrown in any direction from the point where it crossed the touch line by a player who is facing the field of play and has both feet touching the ground on or behind the touchline.

- When the player is throwing the ball in to play, make certain that both feet are on the ground and behind the touchline when the ball is released from the thrower’s hand.
- Although part of the foot is in the field of play, the foot is considered to be on the touchline and legal if any part of the foot is touching the touchline; however, actual touching of the ground, not breaking the plain, is required.
- Make certain that the foot of the thrower has not been lifted off the ground at the time that the ball is released.
- Make certain that the ball is thrown in from the point that it went out of bounds.

The thrower shall use both hands (unless because of a physical impairment can only use one hand) and deliver the from behind and over the head in one continuous motion.

- Key points here is that the ball must be thrown with both hands (unless a physical impairment exists).
- Both hands must be on the ball and come forward with the ball to make the throw.
- Watch for throws that are illegally made with one hand rather than both hands.
- The throw has to start behind the head, come over the head and then release the ball.
- The throw has to be continuous – stopping part way and then continuing is not permitted.
- Be alert for players illegally stopping the throw short and releasing the ball from the top of the head.

If a throw-in is not done properly, a throw-in is awarded to the opponent at the spot of the foul (improper throw-in).

- Allowing the thrower to retake the throw-in is allowed in the 3/4th grade level and below.

If on the throw-in, the ball fails to enter the field of play, the ball is awarded to the opponent at the spot of the infraction.
Touchline/Goal Line

Touchline/Goal Line

- The ball is not live at the instant the whole of the ball goes completely over a touch-line or a goal-line, either on the ground or in the air. A ball may not curve back in and still be live.
- When the whole of the ball goes completely over the defenders’ end line when last touched by an offensive player, it is put back into play with a goal kick.
  - The kick may be taken from anywhere inside the goal area. The ball is live on a goal kick only after it goes directly out of the penalty area.
- When the whole of the ball goes out of play completely over the defenders’ end line when last touched by a defender, it is put back into play with a corner kick.
  - The ball is live when kicked from inside the corner arc.

The key things to remember here are:

"On the ground or in the air":

- Think of the line extending upwards into the sky. If the ball passes over that line on the ground, 50 feet up in the air, or anywhere in between it is out of play.

"Fully" or "whole of the ball":

- The ENTIRE ball must cross that line. This means that 99% of the ball could be over that line, but as long as any portion is still touching that line (in the air or on the ground) then it is still officially in play.

Position of the ball:

- A player touching the ball while he is in play or out of play does not affect whether the ball is in or out. All that matters is the position of the ball.
What is “Preventative Officiating”? 

**Prevent:** Keep from happening........keep from doing something

- Be tolerant
- Know who’s involved in the game
- Stay objective and remain focused
- Do not take the game personally
- Decide what foul deserves a call; use common sense
- Be polite, do not yell

**Some “Preventative Officiating” phrases:**

- “Hands off”
- “Watch your hands”
- “No pushing”
- “Arms down”

**Tip:** In addition to the phrases, some situations may develop where you may need to speak to players. If a coach argues this, let him or her know that you believe the player is too emotional at this time, and a rest is needed.

**Advantage/Disadvantage**

Remember, not all contact is a foul, or a reason to blow your whistle. Sometimes it is better to let the kids “play through it”. Let the play develop and finish, then determine if you should make a call, or no-call. You need to determine if there was incidental contact (did contact cause the player to move, was contact violent, did contact disrupt play). Remember all of this has occurred within a split second, you need to be watching the play. Another thing to think about is.... did the player making the contact gain an advantage? If contact is severe, you should always blow your whistle. If contact involves the head or face, blow your whistle and make the appropriate call.

Make sure you see the whole play, as you will be in a better position to make a determination as whether or not you should make a call or not.

**Tip:** Are you supposed to call every foul? If you blow your whistle every time a foul occurs, the game would never get done. Experience will help you to develop a better sense of the game and what you should call, or not call. Preventative officiating works.

**Incidental Contact**

Not all contact is a foul. Contact will occur in many situations and contact which occurs unintentionally or appears to be equal in nature, should be considered legal. Use your best judgment and be consistent.

**Coach and Bench Decorum**

It is important for officials to communicate with coaches and it is appropriate for this to occur on occasion during the game. It is okay for coaches and players to ask questions provided it is done in a courteous and respectful manner.

However, if a player or coach begins to move towards unsportsmanlike comments or behavior, then it is imperative that the official be firm. Sometimes a warning is appropriate.
Sportsmanship, Your role……
The term “sportsmanship” may be a philosophy of many leagues, but it is not always acknowledged or used on a regular basis. Sportsmanship should be followed by the coaches, players, table crew, on-site coordinator and YOU.

By rule, good sportsmanship is strongly encouraged and is to be enforced. Here are a few things you can do to promote good sportsmanship:
- Take control of a player or coach that uses inappropriate behavior, foul or abusive language. Do not avoid the matter as this could send the message that the behavior is acceptable.
- Give praise where needed. If you equally acknowledge ALL of the players on the field, you will project a positive “up-beat” image for all to follow.
- Compliment examples of good sportsmanship: if a player compliments an opponent on a nice shot, move, etc.

End of the Game
- Shake hands with coaches and players
- Leave the field together and briefly review the game. Keep the communication between you and your partner to a whisper (there are little ears around that hear everything). Keep things positive. Mentally go over any situations and leave the game on the field. Make notes regarding players, coaches, parents etc. Assist in clean up and ensure field and site are cleaned up, and garbage cans are put back in the goals.

Summary & Random Tidbits
You all have watched a soccer game at some kind of level in person or on television. You have seen officials miss a call or two and make calls that have been questioned. Now you are that official
- Put time and effort in to being the best official you can be.
- Be sure you fully understand the fundamental rules of the game. Regardless of what age group, the basic fundamentals of the game apply. Rules are in place to protect the players and to ensure that neither team gains an unfair advantage.
- Communication is the key to successful officiating
- On field experience will help with the mastery and the understanding of all the rules. This takes time and don’t get discouraged. Getting things correct in game situations is tougher than understanding on paper, but it begins with understanding the rules first before applying on the field.
- Before each game, review the league rules for that particular division. If you need clarification, ask.
- You will earn respect of those involved in the contest if you know the rules, how to properly apply them and put fun and safety first
- **Safety of the children must be first and foremost**
How to Handle Different Situations

What if I make a mistake?
The first thing you should do is relax; every referee has made mistakes. Then decide if you can correct it. If you pointed the wrong way on a throw in or foul and you have not restarted the game you can correct yourself. If play has already been restarted then you cannot correct your mistake. You have to let it go and try to do better next time. Don’t try to ‘make it up’ to the team by making a call you know is wrong. Just call the game as carefully as you can.

What do I do if a player is injured?
If a younger player seems to be injured, you should stop play right away and check the player. If the player wants to continue after a few moments rest you can welcome him back on the field. If the player is unable to continue, the coach may send in a substitute. For older players, you may want to wait a few moments before stopping play for an injury.

What do I do if a player is causing a problem?
There are a number of things you can do. If possible, it is better to start with the mildest action and work your way up, if you need to.

- Speak quietly to the player who is acting up. It is a good idea if others cannot hear what you are saying. Try to let the player know you saw what he/she did and you did not like it without giving him a long lecture. Try to be as positive as you can. You could say, “You’re a better player than this.” Or “You’re too good a player to do things like this.”
- If the player does something after you have spoken to him, let the player know what you will do. You might say, “I know you want to keep playing but you must stop doing this. I don’t want to make you leave the field. It’s up to you.”
- Finally, if the player continues to act badly you will have to send him out of the game.

What if a spectator is causing a problem?
There are several people on the field that can help you deal with a problem spectator. Ask for the supervisor’s assistance when dealing with a spectator. If that is not an option, then ask for help from the coaches. When talking to the coaches about a spectator issue, use the words “Coach, we have a problem that we need to resolve”, not “Coach, you have a problem, please take care of it”. Remember, we are all on the same team, coaches, referees, and spectators, all working for the kids. Sometimes teammates need a little reminder every now and then. The key thing to remember is DO SOMETHING. If you have issues with a spectator make sure you write it up in the appropriate report and make sure you let Abbie, Andrea, and Brian know. Always have someone to assist you when dealing with spectators. Don’t ever feel like you have to deal with them by yourself.

What if a coach is causing a problem?
It is just as important to deal with a coach who is causing a problem. Coaches have received training and know what is expected from them. They serve as role models to their teams. If you have a coach that is causing a problem, once again, get the supervisor to help you out. If that is not an option, ask the opposing coach to help you deal with the problem coach. Whatever you decide to do, always remember, DO SOMETHING. Finally, report the problem to Abbie, Andrea, and Brian No abuse of a youth referee is acceptable, but administrators can’t fix it if they don’t know about it.

What do I do in bad weather?
Thunderstorms can be very dangerous. If you see lightning, stop the game and clear the field immediately. Soccer games are often played in the rain or even snow. But if the field is under water or if the wind is blowing the ball around when it is placed on the ground, you may need to stop the game. In very hot weather, you should encourage the players to drink plenty of water and cool off. SAFETY FIRST!!!
Direct Kick vs. Indirect Kick

Direct Kick

A direct kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following 7 offences in a manner considered to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles an opponent

A direct kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following three offences:

- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area)

A direct kick is taken from where the offence occurred. The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

The referee indicates a direct kick by pointing his/her arm forward. The referee does not have to keep his/her arm in that position, unlike an indirect kick which will be discussed further down.

If a direct kick is kicked directly into the opponent’s goal, a goal is awarded. If, for some weird reason, a direct kick is kicked directly into your team’s own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

Indirect Kick

An indirect kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following offences:

- Touches the ball again with his/her hands after he/she has released it from possession and before it has touched another player
- Touches the ball with his/her hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him/her by a teammate
- Touches the ball with his/her hands after he/she has received it directly from a throw-in by a teammate.

An indirect kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referee, a player:

- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his/her hands
- Commits any other offence, not previously mentioned with the direct kick rule, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player

An indirect kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred. The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

The referee indicates an indirect kick by raising his/her arm in the air. He/she maintains his/her arm in that position until the kick has been taken and the ball has touched another player or goes out of play.

A goal can be scored from an indirect kick only if the ball touches another player before it enters the goal. If an indirect kick is kicked directly into the opponents’ goal, a goal kick is awarded. If, for some weird reason, an indirect kick is kicked directly into your team’s own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.
Penalty Kick

When to call a penalty kick:

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the following offences are committed by a player inside his/her own penalty area, regardless of the position of the ball, as long as the ball is in play:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles an opponent
- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area)

Procedure:

The ball must be placed on the penalty mark, which is **12 yards from the goal line**. The player taking the penalty kick must be properly identified, but does not have to be the same player that was fouled. All other players must remain outside of the penalty area until the kick is taken.

The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line facing the kicker until the kick is taken. The goalkeeper is allowed to move along the goal line, but cannot move forward until the kick is taken.

The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward. Once the penalty kick is taken, the player who took the kick is not allowed to touch the ball again until it has touched another player. If the player touches the ball before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team.

If the player taking the penalty kick or a teammate of the player does not follow the rules during the kick, the following will apply:

- the referee will allow the kick to be taken
- if the ball enters the goal, the kick is retaken
- if the ball does not enter the goal, an indirect free kick is given to the opposing team from the spot where the infringement occurred

If the goalkeeper or a teammate of the goalkeeper does not follow the rules during the kick, the following will apply:

- the referee will allow the kick to be taken
- if the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded
- if the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is retaken
Handball

Definition

A handball occurs if any player, other than the team’s goalkeeper within his own penalty area, deliberately handles the ball when in play. A ball can be handled with any part of the arm, from the tips of a player’s fingers right up to the shoulder.

Preventing Possession

A handball should result if a player handles the ball for the purpose of deliberately preventing an opponent from getting possession of the ball. The resulting restart to play should be a direct free kick from the spot at which the infringement was committed for the non-offending side. If this occurs inside the penalty area, a penalty should be awarded.

Goal Preventing

A handball is called when a player is judged to have handled the ball to prevent a direct scoring opportunity such as a shot on an empty goal, or to have prevented a move that might have resulted in a direct scoring opportunity such as a breakaway. This results in a direct free kick taken from the spot of the infringement. If this occurs inside the penalty area, a penalty should be awarded.

Not Awardable

A handball should not be awarded if a player is ruled to have handled the ball accidentally. This refers to a player either attempting to protect himself from injury, for example by placing the hands in front of the face and then being hit by the ball, or a player being hit on the arm by the ball without moving towards the ball and without being able to move out of the way. An example might be a snap shot hitting the arm of a defender at point-blank range. However, if a player’s arm is in an unnatural position, for example outstretched or above their head, then a foul should be awarded whether accidental or not.
Offside Law

Offside is an offense committed by the team which has the ball and is punished with an indirect free kick. It is a common misconception that the ball must be played forward for an offside offense to be committed. This is incorrect however, as an offside offense is related to the position of the ball and the player receiving it rather than the direction it is played.

If the player is in front of the ball when it is played and has not got at least a defender and a goalie closer to the defending goal line than they are, she or he is in an offside position.

But there are some exceptions:

- A player cannot be in an offside position if in their own half of the field.
- It is not possible to be offside from a throw-in, corner kick or goal kick. If the ball is played by a member of the opposing team, an attacker cannot be offside.
- A player who is behind the other teams' goal line, but not in the goal, is not in an offside position. However it is an offense to leave or re-enter the field of play without permission.
- If the player is behind the ball when it is played, he or she cannot be offside.
- An attacker who is exactly in line with the 2nd last defender is not considered to be offside.
- If a player does not 'interfere with play', then it is not an offside offence even if that player is in an offside position.

Generally a player who is 'interfering with play' is one who plays the ball, attempts to play the ball, or interferes with another player's play.

- ALSO for us at the park district we make the call early if there is any chance or risk of injury on the play even if the player does not touch the ball.
**Soccer Terminology**

**Goal:** A goal is scored when the ball crosses below the crossbar and a point is scored when the ball passes above it.

**Penalty Kick:** A kick taken by a player from the penalty spot after a penalty has been given by the referee for a violation in the area by the defending team. The kicker is allowed one shot from the penalty spot to beat the opposing goalkeeper, with every other player forced to stand 10 yards away and not allowed to interfere.

**Direct Kick:** A free kick awarded to a team as the result of a foul by an opposing player and from which a goal can be scored directly, without the ball being touched by another player.

**Indirect Kick:** A free kick from which a goal cannot be scored until after the ball has been touched by at least one player other than the kicker.

**Goal Kick:** A free kick taken by a defensive player after the ball, having last been touched by an offensive player, has gone out of bounds over the goal line.

**Corner Kick:** A direct free kick awarded to the attacking team when a defender last touched a ball that crossed entirely over the goal line, taken from the corner area on the side of the field where the ball went out of play.

**Dangerous Play:** Dangerous play is the act of risking injury to an opponent with a reckless or clumsy challenge. The referee will award a free-kick to the opposition, and may give a yellow or red card to the perpetrator.

**Charging:** A charge may result in the player against whom it is placed falling to the ground (as consequence, as before, of players differing in weight or strength).

**Obstruction:** A foul. The offense of blocking a player without attempting to win the ball. The player being obstructed will often be in possession of the ball, although this is not always the case, particularly when defenders are attempting to shepherd the ball out of play and in the process deliberately blocking the attacking player.

**Offside:** The law states that if a player is in an offside position when the ball is played to him or touched by a teammate, he may not become actively involved in the play. A player is in an offside position if he is closer to the goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last defender, but only if he is in the opposition half of the field. To be offside, a player must:

**Kickoff:** The start or restart of a game at the beginning of each half or after each goal. The ball is passed forward to a teammate from the center spot.

**Throw-In:** A throw taken by a player when a member of the opposition has put the ball over the sideline. The throw must be taken from where the ball went out of play.

**Hand Ball:** When the ball strikes the hand or arm of a player. If the referee deems that a player has deliberately handled the ball, a direct free-kick will be awarded to the opposing team. If the offence takes place in the penalty area, a penalty may be awarded.