



2021 NPSL Referee Handbook



National Premier Soccer League

Paul Scott | Director of Officials
918-230-3325
psscott@npsl.com



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Section 1:

Introduction

The National Premier Soccer League (NPSL) is one of the largest established men's soccer leagues in the United States with over 90 teams competing across the country. The NPSL is sanctioned by the United States Adult Soccer Association (USASA) as an affiliate of the United States Soccer Federation (US Soccer). Competition is organized in four distinct Regions: East, South, Midwest and West.

The NPSL aspires to provide the highest level of men's soccer and strives to continuously raise the overall standard of play. The NPSL is registered as an amateur league; however teams may elect to register amateur or professional players within the rules and regulations of USASA and the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). Teams operate with respect and adherence to the NCAA and other college association eligibility requirements.

Since the 2014 NPSL season, the Referee Program has been serviced by US Soccer (USSF). Officiating assignments are made through a network of US Soccer-supervised National Assignors (NAs), and the NPSL Office of Officiating Services is directed by Paul Scott.



Section 2:

Memo to Game Officials

To: All Game Officials Selected to for NPSL Games in 2021

From: Director of Officials, Paul Scott

Re: Congratulations and Welcome

Congratulations on having been selected to officiate in the National Premier Soccer League (NPSL), and for making it through the pandemic!

It is my distinct pleasure to have been chosen to coordinate and direct officiating services for the NPSL and in doing so work directly with US Soccer and the US Soccer system of National Assignors (NAs). It is the goal of the NPSL to provide you with the necessary information and support to enable you to perform the duties of your assignment in a most professional manner.

Please use this Referee Handbook as a guide to your pre-game preparation and post-match duties and responsibilities as you work NPSL games this season. Feel free to contact me by e-mail or by cell phone (pscott@npsl.com) and 918-230-3325 if situations arise which need clarification. Before contacting us, look in the handbook for the answer to your question. On Game Officials, you will find the contact information for the teams.

In preparation for the game, review the league COVID protocols. If travel reimbursement is needed, review this handbook and follow those requirements. If you don't, be prepared to have the request denied. These teams are working on a shoestring budget, no one is making money.

The Southeast and Sunshine Conferences are paying through GO. The others are to provide your game fee prior to the match. Arrive in a timely manner to resolve any potential issues. For some teams, this is a new procedure.

This league endeavors to provide opportunities for a match official to develop management skills through developing relationships with the coaches and players. Too often, coaches and players are ignored when there is conflict. Ignoring frustration then leads to aggression. Additionally, when referees show arrogance, it leads to trouble. Instead, it is recommended that referees use command presence and personality to communicate with players and coaches. Actively use reflective listening so that they know they have been heard. Also use phrases such as "We can't have this conversation all night long." "Coach, it is time to move on." "Coach, we've got to go back to work." They don't expect you to agree with them, they just want to be heard. There is no need to make threats, but you can set limits.

In regards to misconduct to technical staff, when a warning is given, we require the referee to make this a formal event so there is no ambiguity. This requires the 4th official or AR1 to call the referee over to take disciplinary action. The referee should include the word "warning" in their message so that it is clear that a formal disciplinary action has been taken. If and when a member of the technical staff receives a yellow card, write up a misconduct report in GO. They are subject to yellow card accumulation and this is the only method by which we can track it.



After the match, file the match report immediately upon the completion of the game through Game Officials. If this is not possible, send an email to pscott@npsl.com, dcase@npsl.com and rshacket@npsl.com with the score as well as any misconduct (including the player name, number, and reason). Once this task is completed, then file the report in Game Officials as soon as possible. By following this procedure, you will avoid emails or phone calls requesting this information.

On behalf of the NPSL Board of Directors, I wish you all the very best in the achievement of your officiating goals and objectives as we work together to provide the very best officiating in the NPSL.



Section 3:

NPSL Contacts and League Staff

*Director of Officials

Paul Scott
pscott@npsl.com
918-230-3325

*Managing Director

Cindy Spera
cspera@npsl.com
917-602-0939

*Director of Operations & Club Services

Robin Shacket
rshacket@npsl.com
917-509-5729

Director of Media Relations

Gary Moody
gmoody@npsl.com
303-205-2446

Chairman of the Board

Kenny Farrell
kfarrell@npsl.com
504-385-8984

USSF Referee Coordinator

Hannah Duerr
hduerr@ussoccer.org
312-528-1296

** indicates decision makers for game disputes or postponements / cancelations as referenced in this handbook*



Section 4:

NPSL Pre-Game

Assignments

All assignments will be made by US Soccer and NAs which will appear on the US Soccer assignment web page <http://ussoccer.gameofficials.net> (GO). Assignments are typically made one month in advance. GO should be checked and games accepted or declined in a timely manner. Officials need to be cognizant of the possibility of back-to-back assignments (consecutive home, road or chronological dates or assignments with the same team in different competitions made by different assignors) and avoid their acceptance. Officials should keep their availability up-to-date on the assignment web page.

Pre-Game Contact

Contact must be made between all officials days prior to the game. Whether by e-mail or by phone; the following items must be discussed: Uniform color, mode of transportation (shared when possible), transportation to and from the stadium, **arrival time (1 hour 30 minutes prior to the match), and travel attire (dress slacks and polo, no warm ups or shorts)** and time and place of the pre-game meeting. If there is no locker room available after the match officials may depart in warm ups.

Game Day Necessities

The following officiating necessities must be brought to the game by the officials: Current IFAB Laws of the Game book, NPSL Referee Handbook, AR flags (electronic preferred), Official Sports Uniforms of various colors, current US Soccer Officiating publications, and radio communication devices if possible.

Certified Trainer

The referee must confirm the presence of a certified athletic trainer who is at the match at least one half-hour prior to the match for the purpose of evaluating concussions and other treatment as required by both teams. The referee **Shall Not** start the match without this confirmation. The referee shall delay the start of the match for a maximum of one hour and shall abandon the match with the resultant forfeit score of 3-0 for the visiting team should the presence of a certified trainer or physician not be confirmed. The Managing Director, and/or the Director of Officials, must be notified during this process. It is also recommended that the name of the certified trainer and/or physician present be recorded on the referee Game Report.

Teams may NOT agree amongst themselves to play the game without a trainer. If there is no trainer available, and there is an opportunity to have a physician on site, this is acceptable only if 1) the physician has credentials and certifies in writing that he or she can make assessments on player safety and continued play based on injury, particularly concussion situations, AND 2) approval by either the Director of Officials, Managing Director, NPSL League Staff or an Executive Board Member (Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer) AND 3) this arrangement is in place before the one hour waiting period expires. If there is a physician but no athletic trainer, the home team is subject to a fine and other sanctions.



Home Team Referee Liaison (RL)

The Referee Liaison shall assist the officials with pre-match, halftime and post-match duties, needs, requests and reports. He/she shall be in a position during the match that is easily accessible to the fourth official. The RL duties are to include the following: confirm with the referee the inspection of the field and equipment meeting all standards, proper placement of the fourth official's table, availability and access to the substitution numbers or board, coordination of the teams' various forms, escort the referees from and to the locker room, and other game-related items the referee crew may need for assistance. It is recommended that this person not be an owner or a member of the coaching staff.

Timeline

90 minutes prior to kick-off: The referees will inspect the field, including all game necessary equipment such as goals, nets, corner flags, and field markings. The home team field manager must be notified to correct any problems relating to the field and/or equipment.

80 minutes prior to kick-off: The referee crew will check at least six(6) game balls provided by the home team. These MUST be returned post-game. (Teams, please have the match balls waiting in the referees' locker room to facilitate the inspection.) The fourth official will collect all necessary NPSL paperwork and forms from the RL. A Team Roster Sheet must be collected from each team. This sheet contains the names of all players and team personnel and must be present with the fourth official in the Technical Area throughout the match, for purposes of knowing all persons who are permitted in the Technical Area. The NPSL Official Line up Sheet is to be double checked against the Team Roster Sheet. (This will change if rosters are electronic)

55 minutes Prior to Kick-Off: Game Day Rosters are to be collected from the respective teams. Each Game Roster is to be inspected by the referee and confirmed that the form has been signed by the coach. While teams may travel and dress 18 players for the match, only 18 may be on the Game Day Roster sheet and be eligible for the match. If more than 18 players appear on the Game Day Roster, please have the team check off the 18 players who will be eligible for the match. Teams are required to dress a minimum of 14 players. If less than 14 players are dressed, the game shall be played and the Referee shall so indicate on the minimum standards checklist.

45 minutes Prior to Kick-Off: Inspection of players equipment, uniform numbers, and the identification of starters and the captain cross checked against the Game Day Roster. Only the eleven starters and the seven substitutes listed on the Game Day Roster shall be subject to inspection. The fourth Official MUST maintain possession of the Game Day Roster throughout the match.

Changes to the lineup sheet may be made by the coach or assistant coach up to 5 minutes prior to the start of the match. The 4th official will notify the opposing team of this change.

Player Check-in

Each player must be listed on the team's NPSL Game Day Roster. There shall be at least 14 players listed on the game day roster and no more than 18 players eligible to play in the match. If there are less than 14 players, this should be reflected on the minimum standards checklist. Write-ins are not permitted on the roster.



Team Uniforms

Each team must travel with two sets of 26 identically numbered uniforms, one uniform of predominantly light color (shirt and socks) and the other uniform predominantly dark. Numbers must be only 2 digits. In the case of conflicting uniform colors, the visiting team **MUST** change. Tape on the socks must match the predominant color of the sock. Undergarments must be the same color as the uniform. No jewelry is permitted. The NPSL logo is required to appear on the left sleeve of every player's uniform.

Select - Official Game Ball

Select has provided the NPSL Official Game Ball. The ball has the NPSL logo. This ball **MUST** be used in all games that NPSL teams host. Please report if the Official Ball is not available or used in the match on the minimum standards checklist.

Just Prior to Kick Off

7 minutes Prior to Kick-Off: Officials and starting team's line-up for the international walkout (referees, take this time to inspect the players one last time.) Referee carries the game ball; AR flags are furled. If a PA system is available, player introductions will be made, the National Anthem (s) played. The coin toss conducted may take place before or after the anthem. ARs then proceed to check the goals and nets one last time before taking their position on the touch line.

Coaches, bench personnel and substitute players walk directly to their benches from the locker room.

Immediately before kick-off, the Fourth Official will check the benches and technical areas for the proper personnel. The following persons are permitted in the Technical Area: Seven (7) substitute players listed on the Game Day Roster, three (3) coaches, a manager (1) and a maximum of three (3) members of the medical staff. A maximum of 14 team members may be on the bench and should be professionally attired for the match.

Referee signals for the start of the game.

Section 5:

The NPSL Game

All games shall be conducted in accordance with the current IFAB Laws of the Game except for NPSL Rules of Competition Exceptions.

Substitutions

For the regular season and postseason, each team is allowed a maximum of seven (7) substitutions which includes the goalkeeper. There shall be no re-entry. The NPSL Substitution Pass (7 per team) should be signed by the Referee prior to the match and given to the teams by the Fourth Official just prior to kick off. New this season, the league will be instituting a temporary substitution for the evaluation of concussions. Refer to the addendum at the end of the Handbook for details.

Exhibition (paid gate) & Scrimmage (non-paid gate) Games allow unlimited substitutions as long as both teams agree on the number and the officials are informed of the arrangement upon arrival at the venue.

Send-off

The individual must remain within the designated area, not in the technical areas, for the remainder of the match and have no communication with their team, staff or players. During halftime, they may not remain in the same area as their team. i.e. the locker room. Failure to follow this procedure may result in additional sanctions. NPSL Ejected Players & Coaches Removal Policy - Players and coaches sent off from the field of play shall be met on the sideline at midfield by home team security and escorted to the locker room or any other designated location that was approved by the referee prior to the match. The game shall not restart until the individual who was sent-off has departed the technical area. They are not permitted to watch the game. They must remain in the designated area for the remainder of the match. Additionally, coaches are not permitted to communicate with their team staff or players during the remainder of the game, and are not allowed to remain in the locker room during halftime. The type of communication prohibited would include: cellular, 2-way radios, electronic / digital, written or verbal. Players or coaches returning to the field of play or stands during or directly following the match are subject to additional sanctions. Security personnel should only enter the field at the Referee's request.

Overtime

Regular season NPSL games may end in a tie. Games that require a winner shall be played per the IFAB Laws of the Game Kicks from the Penalty Mark after completion of two 15-minute overtime periods which result in the teams still being tied. There is no golden or silver goal rule.

Game Day Emergency

If an emergency arises relating to Referee crew availability; the Referee must immediately contact the NA responsible for the assignment and possible emergency replacement as well as the NPSL Director of Officials. A listing of the NAs responsible for assignments by State and Team may be obtained from the US Soccer Game Officials site.



Duties and Responsibilities of the Fourth Official

While the duties and responsibilities of the Fourth Official are clearly delineated in the FIFA Laws of the Game, it is important to reiterate the Fourth Official's responsibility for bench decorum and a familiarity with the US Soccer guidance of "Ask, Tell, Dismiss". Occupancy of the NPSL Technical Area by sixteen (16) individuals per team and a seven (7) substitute per team policy will test the Fourth Official's ability to assist the Referee in control of the match. In addition, accurate record keeping of goal scorers and time as well as assists and the record of cautions, substitutions and sendoffs is necessary.

Regarding substitutions, a substitute shall not enter the field of play until the player he is replacing has left the field. The substitute's equipment, number, substitution pass and eligibility must be confirmed. The substitution paddles or electronic board shall be used to indicate the player coming off the field and the player entering as a substitute. The board or paddle should also be used to indicate the amount of added time in each half or over time period as directed by the Referee.

NPSL Concussion Policy

The match may not begin without a certified trainer or physician qualified to diagnose concussions. If there is no one, the referee must notify the league prior to abandoning the match. Any player who loses consciousness during a match and exhibits signs, symptoms or behavior consistent with a concussion shall be removed from the contest and shall not return to play in that match. The home team trainer or physician is the only person who may identify concussion signs, symptoms or behavior. If the visiting team traveled with a trainer, the home team trainer is the decision maker. The home team trainer MUST provide a report to pスコット@npsl.com within four (4) hours of the conclusion of the game, with a copy to the visiting team (if applicable) for follow up. The referee shall also file a supplemental report in such cases.

Referees are advised to stop the game and immediately call the respective trainer and/or doctor onto the field when there has been a collision of heads, an elbow, foot or knee to the head of a player and that player goes down or otherwise shows any sign of a potential head injury.

A temporary substitution may be made during the evaluation process. Refer to the addendum for details.

Section 6:

Authority to Delay or Postpone a Match

The Referee has the authority to delay the start of a match or suspend play once the match is in progress when the delay is caused by adverse weather, field conditions or conditions beyond the control of the teams which would make the playing of the match impractical or dangerous. Although the Referee has complete authority in this regard, it is important to immediately contact the Director of Officials (Paul Scott) or Managing Director (Cindy Spera) if the match is to be postponed. If neither of these people can be reached, then contact the Director of Operations & Club Services (Robin Shacket). It is recommended that the referee contact local TV, radio, or US Weather Bureau to receive accurate information from the meteorologist.

Exception: In a case where a third party (stadium owner) closes a stadium, a game may be canceled more than two (2) hours prior to kickoff, provided the **league and both teams are notified in writing by the stadium owner / managing authority.**

Should a match be terminated prior to the completion of the first half, it shall be rescheduled, if possible. A match terminated after the completion of the first half is considered to be an official match.

Grace Period before the Suspension of Play or Postponement of a Match.

Unless both teams, the Referee, and league management agree to an alternate plan, teams must wait a minimum of one (1) hour before abandoning a game that has been delayed regardless of circumstances. This is not an aggregate time for multiple delays but rather one (1) hour from the time of the most recent delay. The home team, in the presence of the Referee, must immediately notify the Director of Officials or Managing Director via phone, of any postponement issues. The one-hour grace period may be extended, up to a maximum of three (3) hours from the time the match is delayed if there is a likelihood of resuming the match that day. Given the difficulty and cost of rescheduling, every attempt should be made to continue the game. The NPSL Managing Director or appointed league staff has the final say on the length of the extended grace period due to weather (It is a minimum standard violation if the game is abandoned before the NPSL Director is contacted). If the NPSL Managing Director or other NPSL designated decision maker is unavailable (see contact list), the Referee shall be the final authority. No match will be continued after any continuous 3-hour waiting period without the approval of the NPSL Managing Director. If the first game of a doubleheader has been delayed, the feasibility of completing the second game will be taken into account when determining an extended grace period.

If a suspension of play is longer than 30 minutes, the teams shall have the opportunity for a 10-minute warm-up period.



Section 7:

Referee Team Post-game Duties and Responsibilities

Game Reports

The NPSL does not use individual player passes. Prior to the match, each team submits a Game Day Roster which has the player pictures and is formatted to record stats. These rosters also serve as the official game reports and must be kept by the officials after the match.

After the match, each team must initial both rosters / match reports and each member of the referee crew should review these documents for accuracy. All parties should verify the score, goals, assists, misconducts, and estimated attendance.

The referee will then log into Game Officials, go to the match just completed and click on the Match Report in the AFTER GAMES section. Once there, the referee is responsible for completing the following fields: Score, Goals scored (and minute), misconducts, starters, substitutions, and the player's minutes of play. Additionally, the referee is responsible for uploading both teams' documents in the upload section at the bottom of the Stack Sports report. This report should be done immediately after the completion of the match. If for some reason this is not possible, the score and all cards should be reported by email to pscott@npsl.com, dcase@npsl.com, and rshacket@npsl.com.

Please note that there is no electronic recording of assists and attendance, but these fields should be filled out on the actual report that will be uploaded.

Accuracy Checklist for Game Report

- Box Score
- Scorer information: team, first and last name, and uniform number
 - Yellow and Red Card documentation: team, first and last name, uniform number, time of offense, and offense
- Spelling is correct and matches the line-up form
- All critical aspects above are legible

Supplemental Reporting

If a Supplemental Report is needed, the referee will use the reporting tool in Game Officials in the After Games section. Only red cards, discipline of team officials, and other incidents should be reported here. Do not report player cautions, those would have been reported by the method previously reviewed. Note, due to the fact that yellow cards to technical staff cannot be reported in Bonzi, a supplemental report is required. Technical staff are subject to yellow card accumulation and this is the only method by which to track it.

Officials are requested to contact Paul Scott, NPSL Director of Officials to report any send offs or unusual incidents by email at pscott@npsl.com or in emergency at 918-230-3325.

If there is an instance of Referee Abuse or Assault, this report must be filed within 4 hours to the conclusion of the game via the Game Officials reporting tool. They must also email pscott@npsl.com, rshacket@npsl.com, hduerr@ussoccer.org, and their National Assignor.

Section 8:

Additional NPSL Policies

After the Match

Approaching Game Officials - No player, coach or team staff member shall threaten game officials either verbally or physically nor make contact in any manner either before, during or after the match. Coaches and team staff shall not approach game officials prior to the game, at the end of the half, on the way to or from the locker room to lobby for a certain call, discuss the approach to the game, or to criticize a game Official's performance. No one may enter the referees' dressing room without permission. It is strongly recommended that the referee liaison or designee stand at the officials' dressing room door as security. The referee shall report all such incidents in the referee Game Report, and offending individuals shall be subject to a League fine and/or suspension. The Official Crew Evaluation Form is the proper vehicle to express opinions on a game official's performance.

Entering the Field - A player, coach or other team staff member entering the playing field during a NPSL game when not authorized to do so shall be fined and/or suspended by the League.

Host Team Responsibilities and Requirements

Complimentary Tickets - The home team must provide two (2) complimentary tickets per referee crew member including the assessor if assigned.

Stadium parking - The home team must provide a complimentary parking pass on day of game for each crew member including the assessor if assigned. This pass must be provided through the use of a physical pass or by including the name of the official(s) on a parking list at the parking lot entry gate.

Locker Rooms - The home team must provide a locker room for the officials, separate from each of the teams. The locker room shall contain at the minimum towels and water. Absolutely no one is permitted in the Official's Locker Room outside of the officiating crew, the assigned US Soccer/FPF official assessor, and NPSL staff members. Outside member contact with officials on the field, in the areas adjacent to the field, etc. unless specifically approved by the NPSL shall not be permitted.

Reporters and Media Requests - Referee team members are not to comment on any matters related to the game. All inquiries should be referred to the NPSL Director of Media Relations or the NPSL Director of Officials.

Social Media - The use of Social Media by game officials relative to the discussion of NPSL assignments, game day facts, NPSL teams and players, etc. is expressly prohibited.



Section 9:

Game Official Fees and Travel Policy

Regular Season and Early Playoff Game Fees: Referee: \$125, Assistant Referees \$95, Fourth Official \$65

Regional Semi Finals and Regional Finals: 150/100/100/75

National Semi Finals: 175/125/125/100

Championship Match: 200/150/150/125

Travel Expenses: There is no travel expense policy for travel inside of 100 miles round trip. Travel shall be reimbursed at the following levels for the Referee: 101-200 miles round trip \$50, 201+ miles round trip \$100. Assistant Referees: 101-200 miles round trip \$25, 201+ miles round trip \$50

The Fourth Official shall receive \$25 if driving more than 201 miles round trip.

In the event of a match being cancelled, the following policy shall be followed for referee payment. If the referees arrive at the venue and the game is suspended, abandoned, or terminated, they shall receive full game fees and applicable travel.

If the game is cancelled while the referees are en route to the venue, they shall receive half game fees along with travel fees.

If the match is cancelled within 48 hours of kickoff, the referees will receive half game fees.

Officials must contact the home team a minimum of three (3) days in advance of the match to notify the need to pay travel expenses and the amount due. In this way, clubs will have advance notice of the need to pay travel and facilitate the writing of checks of the proper amount and officials being paid correct amounts in a timely manner. If you fail to do this, please do not contact the teams requesting the travel. The exception is if you were assigned within three days of the game. In that case, include your NA on the email requesting travel and explain your circumstance.

Any travel that requires an official to be on the road after midnight following a game is eligible for a hotel for one night, available by request to the home team with a copy to the Director of Officials no less than ten (10) days prior to the match. Unless you were assigned within 10 days of the game, please do not request a hotel. If you were a replacement within this deadline, please also include your NA in the email request.

Where at all possible; game officials should travel together to minimize travel expenses. Only the driver is to receive reimbursement. Mileage between an Official's home and the game site should be confirmed via Google maps or MapQuest documentation. In addition, where a room is requested, officials should pair up and/or use a roll-a-way cot where possible to minimize hotel expense.

If this policy is not followed, particularly the three (3) and (10) day notice policy, the official is not entitled to travel reimbursement without proper pre-notification. Contact information for the teams can be found in Game Officials. Please cc Robin Shacket at rshacket@npsl.com for requests regarding travel expenses and hotel. Please escalate to Robin Shacket if there is no response / acknowledgement from the team within 24 hours.



Game fees are the responsibility of the home team and are paid upon the referee's arrival to the venue. It is important for officials to provide any travel expense request to the home team administrator per NPSL policy so that the team has time to prepare the exact amount of reimbursement due to the officials

The exception to the above policy are the following conferences who will have fees paid through Game Officials:

Golden Gate, Southeast, and Sunshine

In order to get paid through Game Officials, referees must have a current W9 on file with US Soccer. Contact hduerr@ussoccer.org with questions regarding missing payment.

In order to receive compensation for travel from these teams, email Keith Ehrhart at kehrhart@npsl.com within the league's timelines.

Travel and game fees for the National Semi Finals and Championship match will be covered by the league office.



Addendum

Supplementary Match Reports

The supplemental match report is an important part of the referee crew's job. Without a complete description of send-offs and dismissals, the relevant governing committee cannot make informed decisions when it comes to suspensions and fines. To aid officials in the construction of the report, US Soccer has a summary of the important elements in their Advice to Referees. Section 5.13, which is included below, outlines items to address. In the description of the event, it is vital to provide details so that the reader has a clear understanding of what transpired. As part of this then, it should describe the distances traveled, how long the action took place, what was said, visual actions of a player or bench personnel, and preventative actions taken by the officials.

Additionally, information is needed about the person who suffered the action leading to the opponent's misconduct. This includes: Who was the player? Where on their body was the impact? Did they suffer an injury? Did they receive treatment? Were they able to continue playing or did they leave the game then or later in the match due to the injury suffered?

For example:

In the 78th minute, John Smith, #99 of the Falcons was sent-off for serious foul play. While attempting to challenge for the ball in front of his team's bench, he struck the Bears #8, Dave Davies with his cleats. Mr. Smith lunged from a distance of about three yards with a straight leg, catching Mr. Davies in the left thigh with his studs. A foul was immediately whistled and the referee and fourth official intervened to prevent mass confrontation by the players. A red card was shown and Mr. Smith left the field without incident. Mr. Davies received treatment from the trainer and continued playing. Approximately eight minutes later, Mr. Davies was substituted from the game due to this injury.

With a description containing such details, the NPSL disciplinary committee can contact the Bears team to inquire as to Mr. Davies' health and then come to an informed decision upon the length of suspension for Mr. Smith.

Reporting disciplinary action against Team Officials

The league needs to track disciplinary action taken against team officials. They are subject to the same yellow card accumulation as the players are. As such, when formal action is taken the referee must file a supplemental report. Currently, Game Officials does not have the ability to track this. This includes warnings given to team officials. In the narrative of the report, the terminology below should be used when reporting a warning, caution, or sending-off.

Warning

The following offenses should usually result in a warning; repeated or blatant offenses should result in a caution or sending-off:

- entering the field of play in a respectful/non-confrontational manner
- failing to cooperate with a match official e.g. ignoring an instruction/request from an assistant referee or the fourth official
- minor/low-level disagreement (by word or action) with a decision
- occasionally leaving the confines of the technical area without committing another offence
- Note: The referee is the only match official who can give an official warning. The league wants there to be no ambiguity that a member of the team staff has received a warning.

Caution

Caution offenses include (but are not limited to):

- clearly/persistently not respecting the confines of their team's technical area
- delaying the restart of play by their team
- deliberately entering the technical area of the opposing team (non-confrontational)
- dissent by word or action including:
 - throwing/kicking drinks bottles or other objects
 - gestures which show a clear lack of respect for the match official(s) e.g. sarcastic clapping
- entering the referee review area (RRA)
- excessively/persistently gesturing for a red or yellow card
- excessively showing the TV signal for a VAR 'review'
- gesturing or acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner
- persistent unacceptable behavior (including repeated warning offences)
- showing a lack of respect for the game

Sending-off

Sending-off offenses include (but are not limited to):

- delaying the restart of play by the opposing team e.g. holding onto the ball, kicking the ball away, obstructing the movement of a player
- deliberately leaving the technical area to:
 - show dissent towards, or remonstrate with, a match official
 - act in a provocative or inflammatory manner
- enter the opposing technical area in an aggressive or confrontational manner
- deliberately throwing/kicking an object onto the field of play
- entering the field of play to:
 - confront a match official (including at half-time and full-time)
 - interfere with play, an opposing player or a match official
- entering the video operation room (VOR)
- physical or aggressive behavior (including spitting or biting) towards an opposing player, substitute, team official, match official, spectator or any other person (e.g. ball boy/girl, security or competition official etc.)
- receiving a second caution in the same match
- using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- using unauthorized electronic or communication equipment and/or behaving in an inappropriate manner as the result of using electronic or communication equipment
- violent conduct

The NPSL uses the match reporting system through Game Officials. The referee's match report and any supplemental reports should be reviewed by all members of the referee team. By submitting the reports, the referees state that the information is correct. Each of these documents serves a purpose so detail and accuracy is imperative.



US Soccer Advice to Referees - 5.13 Match Reports and Misconduct

Although all aspects of the referee's match report must meet high standards of clarity, accuracy, brevity, and pertinence, those sections involving misconduct require special attention, and reporting on acts of misconduct leading to a send-off merit the highest concern. In order for disciplinary committees to evaluate serious misconduct, match reports must start with:

- The name of (and additional identifying information for) the player who was sent off.
- The time of the send-off, and
- The specific reason in the Laws of the Game for the send-off (Law 12). In addition, however, the referee must supply sufficient detail regarding the circumstances of the misconduct to aid in evaluating its level of seriousness. The verbiage of the Considerations should be used when describing the misconduct.

Among the factors that should be addressed, where relevant, are:

- Whether the action occurred during a challenge for the ball.
- Whether the misconduct occurred at a stoppage of play or during play.
- If anyone was injured as a consequence of the misconduct.
- Whether there was any prior incident that may have led to the player's actions.
- The demeanor of the player during the send-off (including any difficulties in implementing the player's removal from the field).
- The location of the action in relation to the goal line and penalty area being attacked at the time.
- The subsequent intrusion of any other players (teammates or opponents) during the time the referee is managing the send-off.
- The specific words or gestures which were determined to be insulting, offensive, or abusive.
- The identity of the opponent or official toward whom the misconduct was directed.
- A summary of the prior misconduct (or a reference to the section of the report which detailed the prior caution) preceding the second caution for which the player was sent off.
- The identity of the assistant referee, fourth official, or reserve assistant referee who provided independently observed facts to the referee regarding the misconduct.
- All other details of the action which materially shaped the decision to send the player off.

Match reports provided independently by assistant referees or fourth officials should follow these guidelines as well.

When a player commits more than one form of misconduct at the same time (e.g., dissent and abusive language, denial of an obvious goal scoring opportunity and serious foul play, delaying the restart of play and failure to respect the required distance), the referee can use only one as the official reason for the caution or send off.

The reason given should reflect whichever act of misconduct is considered the most serious. However, all misconduct committed by a player must be noted in the referee's report, including any behavior in addition to the official reason for the caution or send off.

Concussion Temporary Substitution Rule

The supplemental match report is an important part of the referee crew's job. Without a complete description The NPSL has implemented a rule change to allow a player who is suspected to have suffered a head injury to be substituted while being evaluated. The substitution for the evaluation of the concussion/head injury will not count against the team's total number of allowed substitutions.

- a) If the player is deemed by the Healthcare Professional (HCP) or Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) to not have suffered a concussion, the player may re-enter the game at any stoppage of play and must replace the original substitute; this head injury evaluation substitution will not count as a used substitution. Furthermore, the temporary substitute will be able to re-enter the game at a later time.
- b) If the player is not cleared to return to play by the HCP or ATC, the replacement player will no longer be considered a temporary substitution and the team will be charged a substitution.
- c) Any discipline issued to the temporary substitute will count for the remainder of the game.

NPSL Head Injury Substitution Rule:

If a player suffers a blow to the head, is suspected of having suffered a concussion, or has an apparent head injury during the course of a game, the club must remove the player from the game for a medical evaluation by the HCP or ATC with a skill set in emergency care and sports medicine injuries and with knowledge and experience related to concussion evaluation and management.

The home team will be responsible for providing an HCP or an ATC at each game, regardless of where the game is being played. This medical professional will have the final authority on head injuries and must be made available to the visiting team.

This amendment is only applicable for head injuries; all other injuries will follow the standard substitution Law. A team may only make a temporary substitution if they have at least one substitution remaining. In the event there are multiple players being evaluated with head injuries from the same team at the same time, that team cannot make more temporary substitutions than the number of substitutions that team has remaining. For example, if two players from the same team receive head injuries at the same time, that team needs two available substitutions, (injured players that are cleared can re-enter at separate stoppages.)

The temporary substitution will not count against the team's total number of allowed substitutions. If the player being evaluated has received clearance from the HCP or an ATC to return to the game, that player may re-enter at any stoppage of play and must replace the original temporary substitute, who will remain an available substitute and will be permitted to re-enter the game. Any cautions assessed to that player while in the game as a temporary substitute will carry with the player for the remainder of the game. In the event that the player receives a red card while in the game as a temporary substitute, the player must exit the game and the team must play a man down. Following the send-off, if the player being evaluated for a head injury is cleared to return, the player may re-enter the game but the team will have to utilize a substitution.

If the game ends before the evaluated player is cleared to return, the temporary substitute will be marked on the game report as a standard substitute.

If the player being evaluated for a head injury is not cleared to return, the temporary substitute will remain in the game and the team will be assessed a substitution.

When making the temporary substitution, a substitution pass for the substitute shall be presented to the 4th official. If the temporary substitute does not remain in the game, that pass will be returned to the team.



Possible Scenarios

If there is only one substitution remaining and a temporary substitute enters the game, can the teams make any other substitutions while the injured player is being evaluated?

- Yes, either team may substitute at any stoppage with permission from the referee.

A temporary substitute receives a head injury while in the game

- If a temporary substitute receives a head injury while in the game as a temporary substitute, that player may be replaced by an additional temporary substitute, but only if that team has substitutes remaining.
- If there is not another substitution remaining, the team must play a man down until either the original player or the temporary substitute being evaluated have been cleared to return.
- If a second temporary substitute is utilized and both the original player and the first temporary substitute are not cleared to continue, the second temporary sub can remain in the game.

Two players on the same team receive head injuries at the same time

- To replace both players with temporary substitutes, the team must have two substitutions.
- If both players being evaluated are not cleared to return, the temporary substitutes become formal substitutes retroactively, at the time of the injury stoppage.

What if the player being evaluated receives a red card?

- The temporary substitute must come off the field
- The team plays a man down
- The temporary substitute that was in the game for that player returns to the technical area and is available throughout the rest of the game as a regular substitute.

What if the temporary substitute receives a red card?

- The temporary substitute must leave the field of play
- The team must play a man down the rest of the game
- If the player being evaluated is clear to return to the game, he may come back in the game in place of another player, but the team will have to utilize one substitution

A goalkeeper receives a head injury

- A head injury to a goalkeeper is treated exactly the same as any other head injury. There are no special circumstances for this situation

Does a neck injury count as a head injury?

- No, neck injuries are not considered head injuries



2021 NPSL Referee Handbook

National Premier Soccer League

Paul Scott | Director of Officials
918-230-3325
psscott@npsl.com