

FROM THE DESK OF JOHN CORBETT

20 February 2005

To: West Michigan Soccer Officials

I hope that this finds you well and ready for the Spring season. I am looking forward to working with you again, and thought that I would get my letter in ahead of all the last minute demands on your time as Spring season approaches.

The State Referee Youth Administrator wants to include more West Michigan referees in State Cup play beyond the preliminary local rounds. I do not know the final mechanism for selecting referees to offer assignments to. I am sure that they will not only seek competent and poised referees, but also look for compliance with dress code, appearance at the field at least ½ hour prior to kick-off, etc. I cannot guarantee that anybody, or everybody, will be offered assignments. But I can tell you that you could very possibly reduce your own chances of being offered an assignment by failing to do your best to cover all the bases. I have mentioned these factors in other articles because they are important- even for the local games.

I will do my best to prompt selections and offers in this area. I will advocate for referees that are not only competent and poised, but also who do appear on time for games, are dressed appropriately, etc. This is not only a indication of the referee's credibility, but on mine as well.

I strongly urge you to deal with coach, player, and parent abuse/harassment and assault. Be it a firm word (followed by action if the person is a slow learner), a warning, or a card. I know that this will be more difficult for the younger referees, and the newer referees. I also know that by disposition, some referees will find it less stressful to tolerate the behavior, than to confront the behavior. In any event, I expect that you will do your best. If you have questions about the behavior, talk to your crew before the game, at breaks, and post game. You may also telephone to me to get my opinion. If you believe that harassment, intimidation or threats were present during the game, call me **before** you write up and submit the game report. Maybe there wasn't a problem that needs to be reported- but incidents should be reviewed. Remember that each of us, in each game, will set the standard of what is acceptable (and therefore, allowed) in each game. When abuse, harassment or threats are allowed, they become worse and destroy the spirit and integrity of the game- even when they are not

directed at a referee. This does not mean that a coach or player cannot appropriately question a decision- but it must be done appropriately. When parents are the problem, they can be sent from the area, dismissed from the linesman position, etc. If you have questions about this, please contact me.

If you accept a game:

- Please write down the details so you know where to go and what to do.
- If someone fails to appear, telephone to me at the end of the day and let me know who was there. I will follow up on the other person.
- if you are short a referee, and a spare referee is available, you may use the spare referee. **Telephone to me so that I know who did what.**

If you are trying to pick up an extra game, please wait until 5 minutes before the kick-off before choosing a substitute in order to minimize confusion and let the referee appear. If you are late, and a club line is being used, wait at the midline until the referee recognizes you at a stoppage of play to take your position. If another referee is working the game for you, wait for a stoppage to see if the referee will relinquish to you. If the referee wants to continue the game, you are now extra and will wait for your next assignment, or look for a game with a club lineman to replace. You may also ask at a 9 or 10 game if you can donate your services as an assistant referee. While there may be reasons beyond your control for being late, the referees must make every effort to begin each game on time. Therefore, each referee should make the extra effort to do whatever is possible to make sure he is there at least 30 minutes prior to kick-off.

If you do not know your assignment, do not bump younger referees from their assignments. This is unacceptable, and may result in the loss of games already assigned and them being offered to the "bumped" referee.

Please check the goals to make sure they are securely anchored. This is your only option. You cannot determine whether or not it is likely that the players would hang on the goal, move the goal, etc. Such factors are irrelevant. The goal is, or is not, securely anchored. If it isn't, the match is not started. You should make this determination well before kick-off so that the team(s) have ample time to anchor and still have the game start on time.

I will contact each of you to make sure that I have ages, address, and telephone numbers up-to-date. If you want to initiate the call, I would appreciate it.

You should be thinking about requesting an assessment to be up-graded. It is good for you, and a benefit to the other referees you work with. We can, and should, support each other towards this goal.

I am able and willing to informal assessments, a D&G (developmental and guidance). Contact me, and I will schedule you. There is no cost, and no one has committed suicide yet after meeting with me. (I hope that continues.)

Please remember, in spite of all the demands placed upon you, and the judgments made about you before you open your mouth or blow the whistle- it is only a game. And it is also a game for the referee crew. Learn from each play, improve, and have fun. What more could anyone ask of you?

Don't worry. Someone will think of something....

Thank you for your time, and patience. Enjoy the Winter.