

# U8 Referee Cheat Sheet

Fall 2011

## Equipment to bring

Watch with timer, whistle, paper and pen (to keep score), coin

## Pre-game checklist

1. Determine who will referee the match - referee(s), coach(es), parent(s)
2. Inspect the field for unsafe items, conditions
3. Inspect the field for corner flags, adequate lines, dangerous debris or conditions
4. Inspect the goals for secure anchoring; field side of goal line and goalposts are to align
5. Greet coaches, shake hands, write down their names (you will otherwise forget)
6. Discuss any unusual game circumstances (short handed teams)
7. Discuss if mid-half breaks should extend past one minute due to hot weather
8. Inspect the teams (shin guards, no hard casts, no jewelry, and no earrings period)
9. Procure a game ball (#3 for U8); confirm adequate inflation
10. Coin flip
  - a. At center circle, one player calls flip while player from other team witnesses
  - b. Flip winner selects side of field to defend and kicks-off start of second half
  - c. Flip loser kicks off start of first half
  - d. Write down who kicks off and in what direction (you will otherwise forget)

## During the game

Timekeeping – Yours is the only watch that counts. Each half will end when you blow your whistle after approximately (not exactly) twenty total minutes. You can add extra time for any injuries or any other stoppages in play. This added time is solely at the discretion of the referee. In the middle of each half, you will allow each team one minute for substitutions (unless another pre-determined amount of time has been agreed upon). Players can get water at these times, but these are not intended to be full stop coaching opportunities. Play should be stopped at a natural play stoppage (roughly ten minutes into the half), and play should re-start as normally would occur following such a stoppage (throw-in, corner kick, etc.). Adjust overall game time so that it will end five minutes before the hour so that games will stay on schedule.

Substitutions – Official substitutions should occur only at the start of the second half in the middle of each half, but at the referee's discretion, in game substitutions are allowed should a player be hurt or if a player just needs time to collect themselves. In these cases, coaches and refs will collectively use their best judgment to make this work for the players. When such a substitution occurs, the original player can be sent back in only when play is stopped and the referee is notified. A good referee will normally make sure the player is indeed ready to come back into play. Flexibility here is very important – its always about the kids!

Player Count – It is important for the referee to be cognizant that the proper number of players is always on the field. This should always be done following a substitution. It is the coaches', not the referees' responsibility to assure that players are being provided equal playing time.

Instruction – More than in more advanced divisions, the U8 referee is very involved in on-field instruction. Clear and simple direction is always encouraged, such as guidance in making throw-ins, goal kicks, and explanation of rules. Such guidance should always be provided in positive and encouraging ways. Few things should be explained to six and seven year olds without smiles. Remember, praise, praise, praise! And this includes the coaches and parents.

Teamwork – The good U8 referee always knows that the most successful learning experience for the kids is provided by the team of the referee and the coaches. Good cooperation and communication should continue through the entire game between these three. This team should always remember that the kids are watching and learning from how we handle unique situations. Common sense will always outweigh competition.

## After the game

Make sure to congratulate the kids for a job well done, answer any questions players may have, observe the post-game handshakes, and thank the coaches for their efforts.

## Safe, Fair, and Fun!

Remember that every decision a referee makes on the field should first consider safety, then consider fairness, and finally make sure things stay fun!

## Referee Questions?

Please call or e-mail Dave Schlensker, Regional Referee Administrator at 312.735.0165 or [Ref.Admin@AYSO418.org](mailto:Ref.Admin@AYSO418.org) with any questions, comments, or concerns.