

Tuesday, August 8, 2006

To: Metrolina Area Soccer Referee Association Members and Team Coaches

From: Eric W. Johnson, Clinics and Assessments

Subject: Disqualifications and Ejections

Several years ago, in response to some very ugly and very specific violence in High School athletics, NCHSAA Board of Directors established a North Carolina Ejection Policy **that applied to all sports**. It called for very stern sanctions for any athlete in any sport when the athlete commits certain prohibited actions. The focus on these sanctions was violent behavior, the response to violence, and the taunting that usually preceded or followed much of this behavior. In its first year, the sub-committee on Officiating and Rules were horrified to note that soccer had far more ejections than any other sport. Only too late did committee members – all with no soccer knowledge or experience – realize that the North Carolina Ejection Policy used a term already in place to cover the most severe kind of fouls in soccer. But rather than returning to soccer the term "ejection" and use another term for all sports, the Board revised the policy to introduce **in North Carolina soccer a new term "Disqualification."** Many knowledgeable soccer officials and coaches warned the Board and the Committee of the potential confusion and how isolated North Carolina high school soccer would become in the rest of the playing world. The policy and terms stand.

Statement #1: In North Carolina High School soccer, disqualifications and ejections during a match may not be linked to an allowed substitution. Taunting and Baiting results in a yellow/red card, the player must leave the match, and the team may substitute. A Second Caution in the same match results in a yellow/red card; the player must leave the match, and the team may substitute.

Statement #2: With one exception, USSF and FIFA Laws of the Game and Federation Rules of Soccer agree on the results of an issued Red Card.

If a player commits any of the following fouls, the player shall be shown a red card and shall leave the field of play for the remainder of that match: Serious Foul Play, Violent Conduct, Spitting, Abusive or Offensive

Language; Denying a Goal by Deliberately Handling the Ball; and Denying a Goal by Fouling the opponent. The team of the penalized player shall not be allowed to substitute. Notice that I did not use the common soccer term of ejection because **in North Carolina** these may or may not be ejections but disqualifications.

The one exception is: Receiving a Second Caution in a match. By Federation rules, the player receiving the yellow/red card must leave the field of play for the remainder of play but the penalized team is allowed to substitute.

Situation #1: Alex of Team A has a breakaway run with the ball and is about to take on the goalkeeper one-on-one. Bradford of Team B comes in from the side and grabs the arm of the attacking player and brings Player A down.

Result #1: Bradford is shown a Red Card for using a foul to deny a clear goal scoring opportunity and must leave the field for the remainder of play. Team B is not allowed to substitute for Bradford and plays down one player (or down one additional player if circumstances warrant). **In North Carolina high school play, Coach B of Team B is told of the foul, informed he may not substitute, and Player B is disqualified but not ejected.**

Situation #2: Cheswick of Team C scores a goal in a very tight match. Rather than returning up field with his team, Cheswick picks up the ball, turns to the defending goalkeeper and performs a very suggestive full gesture dance right in front of the keeper.

Result #2: Cheswick is shown a Yellow/Red Card for taunting or baiting, and must leave the field for the remainder of play. Team C is allowed to substitute for Cheswick and plays at full strength (barring earlier penalized action). **In North Carolina high school play, Coach C of Team C is told of the misconduct, informed he may substitute, and Player C is likely ejected.**

Situation #3: Dracaena for Team D interferes with an opponent's free kick and is Cautioned for failure to respect the required distance. This is Dracaena's second caution in this match.

Result #3: Dracaena is shown both the Yellow and Red Cards and must leave the field for the remainder of play. Team D is allowed to substitute for Dracaena and plays at full strength (barring earlier penalized action).

In Federation high school play (including North Carolina), Coach D of Team D is told of the second caution, informed he may substitute, and Dracaena is disqualified.

Please note that the issue of substitution is not a part of the North Carolina Ejection Policy since it applies to all sports, but in soccer the underlying foul is in control. Taunting results in a substitution but Biting does not, for example.

Situation #4: Evian of Team E violently takes Farouk out along the touch line and then squares around and eggs on Farouk to fight him. He then takes a couple of swings at Farouk.

Result #4: Evian is shown a Red Card, and must leave the field of play. Team E is not allowed to substitute and plays one player down (barring earlier penalized action). **In North Carolina high school play, Coach E of Team E is informed of the fighting, told he may not substitute for the Direct Red Card, and told Evian is likely ejected.**

Statement #4: If, in the opinion of the referee, a second caution to a player is for a pattern of behavior designed to take away an opponent's ability to continue in the match, she or he should seriously consider the issuing a red card for violent conduct or serious foul play, sending a message to the team and coach to discourage this type of provocative behavior.

North Carolina Ejection	Misconduct	Card Issued	Substitution	Sanction*
Yes	Fighting	Red (Violent Conduct or Serious Foul Play)	No	Ejection
Yes	Profanity	Red (Abusive or Offensive Language)	No	Ejection
Yes	Obscene Gestures	Red (Abusive or Offensive Language)	No	Ejection
Yes	Intentionally Biting	Red (Violent Conduct or Serious Foul Play)	No	Ejection
Yes	Disrespectfully Addressing or Contacting an Official	Red (Abusive or Offensive Language, or Violent Conduct)	No	Ejection
Yes	Taunting or Baiting	Red and Yellow	Yes	Ejection
No	Second Caution	Red and Yellow	Yes	Disqualification
No	Serious Foul Play	Red	No	Disqualification
No	Violent Conduct	Red	No	Disqualification
No	Spitting	Red	No	Disqualification
No	Deny Goal using Hand	Red	No	Disqualification
No	Deny Goal using Foul	Red	No	Disqualification

* Special Note for MASRA Soccer Officials and served schools: If there is any gray area in a particular situation, the referee may offer an opinion as to whether the act rises to the level of ejection or should remain a disqualification. A report should be filed with Mr. Freeman as soon as possible; NCHSAA officers, in consultation with Mr. Freeman and perhaps the assigned officials, will make the final decision.