

# Welcome to Nashua Youth Soccer U10 Level – Fall 2023

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Nashua Youth is a recreational soccer league where players learn how to play soccer at both an individual and a team level. Coaches are usually parents who themselves are relatively new to soccer and learning how to teach and control players at this level. At Under 10 the challenge is to help them through the process while learning officiating techniques yourself with the guidance of mentors.

NYSL shirts are reversible: the home team wears green; the other side is white. At the beginning of the season, we will have players who need shirts.

The biggest challenge is to ensure goalkeepers wear colors different from the players. Coaches sometimes have either red or blue pinnies to help.

## Referee Gear

Referee uniforms changed effective 2019 - with the yellow shirt being the default color and black, red, blue and green being allowable alternates. Wearing the new yellow shirt might be a problem if some players wear the older NYSL yellow /white shirts or yellow pinnies to play. Referees who have other color shirts typically will wear the black, red, or blue alternate to differentiate themselves from the players.

Being new we do not expect you to have other colors to start your career so suggest considering putting a pinnie over your yellow shirt if you suspect a conflict with players. If all else fails have a black tee-shirt as a backup. You should plan to procure a new red, black, or blue shirt when moving up to officiating more competitive higher age levels.

- You can wear a shirt under your uniform but it should always be black.
- Shorts should be black (no stripe) and full length black socks with either 3 stripe or 2 stripes.
- When cold you can wear black warm-up pants.
- You should always have extra clothes to wear under your shirt in case it rains or gets cold.
- Black Gloves and knit hats are allowed on very cold days.
- A black baseball type hat w/o logo can be worn if too much exposure to weather is a problem.
- Be careful of over dressing for cold mornings without a way to remove undergarments when it gets warmer!

**Because of continuing Covid-19 pandemic concerns for personal and public safety wearing a mask during the game is up to the player's and or referee discretion.**

**ALWAYS be dressed to officiate when arriving at the field!**

### What you should have with you.

- A wristwatch that counts down.
- A whistle
- A pen/pencil and something to write on.
- A flipping coin

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**Referees should also have their own hand sanitizer and towels to wipe sweat during stoppages!**

As you get more experienced you will need:\

- Red/Yellow Cards;
- formatted score sheets to capture scores and the identity of cautioned or injured players;
- an air pump; pressure gauge;
- an extra coin and whistle.

When you go to other locations where a 3-man system is used you will also need linesman flags.

You should have more than 1 style whistle to help players differentiate your sound from other whistles if and when there are many games playing side by side.]

**If you choose to wear a mask during the game, it might be wise to use and an electronic hand held whistle.**

Use a wrist lanyard or finger holder for your whistle. We do not recommend hanging your whistle around your neck like a basketball referee. If you only have a long lanyard you can wrap the lanyard around your hand during the game to make it easier to handle.

**How loud you blow your whistle shows players and parents how confident you are in making a decision! The louder the better!**

**When using an electronic whistle learn how/where to point it to get maximum sound. It is probably a wise decision to have spare batteries in your bag, if you referee a lot.**

**BRING Water and or Sport's Drinks - Hydrate regardless of the weather!**

**Consider having sunscreen and also insect repellent if officiating in heat of day or early evening!**

**Keep your gear in a Backpack or Duffel Bag that can be closed and not open while you're on the field. Always have a plastic trash bag to cover your bag and gear when the ground is wet or when it rains!**

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## Before the Match

**Have your referee whistle, watch and other gear ready the night before the game so you don't have to search for it while hurrying to the game the next day.**

Always prepare for your assignment by checking the NYSL webpage for any special instructions, procedures, or rules which apply to your match.

### **Review NYSL playing and officiating rules periodically!**

If it is raining check the webpage and email before heading to the field to see if Games have been canceled. Any cancellation will occur around 7 am on the game day. If nothing is published **assume the game is on!**

## Arriving

U10 games at MD start at 8:00 and or 9:30 am depending on number of teams playing this season.

The Referee must check in with Referee Mentor ½ hour before the start of the first game he/she is scheduled to officiate to confirm the field assignment and get any final words of wisdom before the game starts. A game assignment may be moved based on what we know about teams and which mentor we want to work with a referee.

## Field Inspection

The assigned referee for the first game of the day should walk the field to ensure the field is safe to play, the goal/nets are set up correctly, and corner flags are in place. You may have to help get the field setup if coaches/parents aren't getting it done.

You also need to ensure you have the right sized ball , i.e. size 4, with sufficient pressure to play the game.

Any problem should be reported to the Division Coordinator or Referee Mentor.

## Number of players

U-10 plays 7v7 format, (6 field players + a goalkeeper).

You need to have 5 players to start the game and avoid a forfeit.

In this format, coaches may field 5, 6 or 7 players during a quarter.

There is no requirement to play equal numbers.

Coaches may mutually decide to play with even sides if one team does not have enough players.

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## **Mercy Rule**

The mercy rule (in Officiating rules) allows the losing team to field an 8th player if there is a **3** goal differential. A coach may not want to add a player – it is their choice!

If the losing team has no additional player to add then the leading team has an option to remove a player. If the lead differential falls to **1** goal then team numbers are restored.

A coach can decide he doesn't want to play with as few 5 players and can accept players from the opposing team so they can play the game, understanding he/she will forfeit the match. The added player must be registered as an U10 player in NYSL and have a proper shirt to participate.

**We suggest you delay the start of the match up to the allowed 10 minutes grace time for starts if the coach is expecting more players and the match can be played without a forfeit.**

If a player arrives after the start of the match, the coach can require him/her to wait until the next period to play if he/she wants to make a point about getting there on time.

Rules will be different and more strictly followed as you get to officiate at the higher age divisions! As a referee, you need to know which rules apply for the venue you are officiating.

## **Locating Parents, Coaches, and Players and Coaches behavior**

Players and coaches will be located between fields. Parents will watch the game from opposite sidelines from coaches/players unless they have been drafted to be a coach, or have been called over to attend to a player with an injury!

If coaches have a young child that does not have another adult to watch over them then they can be seated with players (as long as they behave!)

Coaches should confine themselves to the area between the half-line and Penalty area line on the half of the field where their team is seated.

When there are two or more coaches, there may be cases when their shouting exceeds what would be expected for someone providing normal/tactical guidance and can become abusive. Ideally, only one coach should be shouting at one time. Ask your mentor to talk to coaches about toning it down!

Parents must be located on the opposite sideline from players and be back far away from the line to not be in the way of players taking a throw-in or corner kick.

No one should stand or be seated behind goal lines, especially behind the goal!

Note that since parents and coaches were allowed to stand behind goals in the U8 division they may not know where they can be located in upper divisions.

Be cordial and respectful when asking them to move!

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## Player Inspection

You are checking players for items allowed/not allowed by NYSL rules and items affecting player safety.

- Soccer shorts or sweat pants are required. Players may not play in jeans or other types of clothing which have loops or ornamental chains.
- No jewelry; bracelets; no studded earrings! Taping over studs is not an acceptable alternative to removing them.
- **Hair adornment items, such as beads in braided hair are allowed as long as they are secured to the head and not a danger to the player themselves or surrounding players.**
- Hooded sweatshirts are allowed but need the hood tucked in!
- The NYSL reversible shirt must be worn! Although *lately there has not been any enforcement for requiring NYSL green socks*, Shin guards are always required and **socks need to cover the shin guards.**
- Players with eyeglasses must have a retainer to hold them on. No exception. A temporary retainer can be made from elastic bands or string.
- Soccer cleats or sneakers are allowed. Generally any molded cleat that does not present an obvious danger, e.g. exposed metal due to wear or modification, are allowed. **Footwear is to be inspected as part of the pregame for each game.**
- If medical or religious jewelry bracelets need to be worn they need to be taped down!
- Players with braces must wear a mouth guard (no exception)
- **Wearing of soft pliable face masks during the game, as was a custom during the pandemic is a personal choice.**
- No hard casts made of plaster, fiberglass, or inflexible material are allowed. Soft casts or those with bubble wrap or foam wrap can be worn **only** with the approval of the referee.

Do not expect everyone to have correct uniforms when we start. U10 will play with whatever they have. The Division Director on site shall be consulted to address deficiencies with player clothing.

Refer all questions to Referee Mentors for decision. We may let players play as long as we tell the parent what is wrong to be fixed in the future. **Telling the child alone will not ensure the problem is addressed.**

## Game Duration/Substitutions

U10 play 4 (four) 12 minute quarters running time with no stoppage. Substitutions are only allowed at quarters. The time between quarters is typically 2 min; with a little more (i.e., 5 min) at half time.

NYSL rules say that players must be afforded equal playing time; each person must play at least 2 quarters before another plays 3 quarters; etc. This is enforced by the Division Director- not the referee!

A player can be replaced during a quarter for an injury- but cannot return until the next quarter.

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A coach can attend to an injured player on the field and determine if he/she can stay in; unlike higher age levels when he/she has to leave the field. **The injured player is counted as having played that period in considering equal playing time; whether the player coming in is counted as playing that period also is determined by the Division Director if there is an issue.**

**If a player is wearing a mask during the game, be extremely watchful that this does not cause a breathing problem for the player during play. If you suspect a problem bring it to the attention of the coach.**

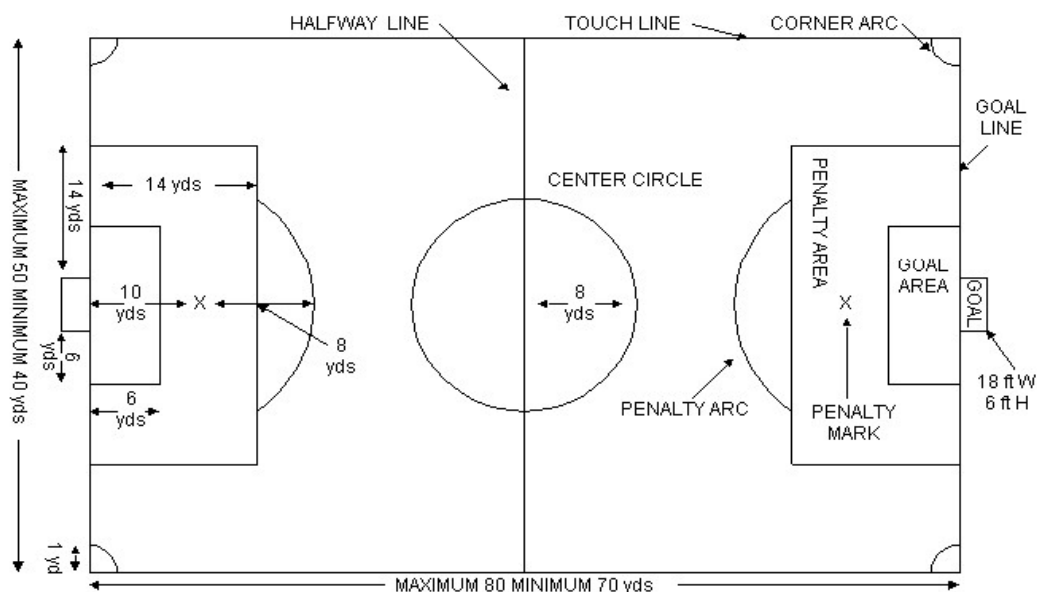
It is not your place to determine if a player is injured or not – unless you suspect a head injury then concussion protocol considerations apply.

**Being tired is not an injury!**

## Small-sided Game fields

You will notice that fields and goals/nets for small-sided games are much smaller than 11v11 fields. As a result some adjustments are required in distance players must stand away from kicks. i.e. 8 yards from a kick, not 10 yards required by 11v11.

## U10 & U9 FIELD DIMENSIONS



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*The distances on this diagram are examples of what can be expected on a small sided field. Actual small sided field dimensions will vary by location.*

## Starting the Game

Normally for the game to start there needs to be a coin toss to determine who will take the initial kick-off and which goal they will defend.

**For NYSL U10 it is recommended that there be no coin flip and the teams defend the sides they select for warm-up and first kick-off be awarded to visiting team .**

## Who takes the Kickoff and Sides to Defend

The team with first kickoff will defend that side of field for the first two quarters. Teams will switch field sides at half time. The team taking the kick-off will be switched each quarter.

## Kick-off

For every kick-off

- All players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be in their own half of the field of play.
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 8 yards from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball must be stationary on the center mark **prior to kick-off**.
- The kick-off is not taken until the referee gives a signal.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again before it has touched another player, an indirect kick is awarded for the other team.

In the event of any other kick-off procedure offenses, the kick-off is retaken.

## During the Game

It is important to understand that the referee will need to help players learn how to do things correctly! This means explaining what they did **incorrectly** and how to prevent repeating it. Speaking loudly is preferred since most coaches want to hear what is being said so they can help instruct their players properly.

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## Build Out Line

US Soccer is promoting the use of a Build-Out Line for developing younger players. This means that when the goalkeeper has the ball either during play (from the opponent) or from a goal kick, the opposing team must move behind the Build-Out line until the ball is put into play.

*If the field markings do not have a unique Build-Out line then the referee will use the half line as the Build-Out line.*

### When the goalkeeper gains possession of the ball

- Opposing players must move behind the Build-Out line until the ball is released into play.
- Goalkeeper releases the ball into play by either throwing it, rolling it, or passing it (putting ball on the ground and kicking the ball).
- No punting or drop kicks are allowed.
- An opposing player cannot interfere unless the ball is in play.

An indirect free kick will be awarded to the goal clearing team if an opposing player crosses the build-out line early and interferes with the goalie while releasing the ball.

- If the goalie punts or drop kicks the ball, the goalie will be asked to retake putting the ball in play.

### For Goal Kicks

- Opposing players must move behind the Build-Out line until the ball is released in play.
- The ball **must be kicked and clearly move** to be released in play.
- The ball does not have to clear the penalty area.
- The goal kick will be retaken if an opposing player crosses the Build-Out line early and interferes with the goal kick
- The goalkeeper can choose to put the ball into play before opposing players are behind the Build-Out line but he/she does so accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how close opposing players are when play resumes (ball clears penalty area).

### For Offside

- A player can only be in an offside position if they are closer to the opponent's goal than the "Build-Out line" and the second last defender.
- An offside infraction will be called if a player receives the ball while clearly in an offside position, e.g., waiting in the opponents end of the field (some distance, e.g., 2-3 yards or more) beyond the second last defender.
- If the player is in close proximity to the second last defender, e.g., within a yard or so and challenging for the ball, the player should not be considered offside.
- When in doubt **DO NOT CALL OFFSIDE!**



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## Referee focus for Build-Out

The challenge for the referee is to **use their voice** to move players back to the Build-Out line, ensure they don't cross over the Build-out line too soon and help the goal keeper understand what they need to do to get the ball in play all at the same time.

## Penalty Kick

There usually is no penalty arc or penalty spot marked on the field. The penalty shot will be taken at a point 10 yards from the goal line, which is midway between the markings for goal area and outer edge of the penalty area. The process for taking the kick includes:

- The referee visually estimating where the kick is to be taken.
- Identifying who will take the kick and handing them the ball to place the ball on the spot to which you are pointing.
- Instructing them to wait for the whistle before kicking.
- Instructing all other players to move out of the penalty area and stand no closer than 8 yards from the kicker. If there **is** a penalty arc, it would be 8 yards from the point of the kick.
- Instruct the goalkeeper to stay on the goal line, facing the kicker; between the goalposts, without touching the goalposts, crossbar or goal net, until the ball has been kicked.
- After the players have taken positions, signal for the kick to be taken.

The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward.

When the ball is kicked the defending goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot touching, or in line with the goal line. **(New for 2019). Standing on the line is all we expect for U10!**

The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player.

The penalty kick is completed when the ball stops moving, goes out of play, is played by another player or the referee stops play for an offense.

## Throw-ins

A player taking a throw-in must keep both feet on the ground, be on or behind the line, and throw the ball with both hands from behind **and over** the head. If a player is not doing any of this correctly let them know what they are doing **incorrectly** and let them take another try.

Opposing players cannot interfere with the taking of the throw-in.

The referee must be in a good position to be able to see the throw-in but also be ready to cover the next play. Watch the thrower not the movement of the ball!

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## Ball Hitting the Referee

If a ball hits the referee during play and affects the play, the match will be restarted with a drop ball if after being hit:

- The team in possession of the ball changes.
- The ball goes directly into the goal.
- An opportunity for a promising attack is created.

The ball should be dropped at the point where the player last played the ball. If the ball is to be dropped in the penalty area, it will always be dropped to the goalkeeper's team.

Examples:

The most common situation will be a possession change. Green has the ball. Green passes the ball which hits the referee and white gains possession. Stop play. Do a drop ball to green at the position the last green player played the ball before it struck the referee. (Unless the green player was in the penalty area. In that case the drop ball goes to the white goalkeeper.)

It will be unusual for a goal to be scored directly off the referee. If a team scores an own goal off the referee, give a drop ball to that team. If a team scores off the referee, treat the restart as a possession change. Give the drop ball to the team that had possession unless the drop ball would occur in the penalty area.

It will be highly unlikely that a ball striking a referee will create a promising attack. Green has the ball. Green passes the ball which hits the referee and rebounds to a green player who gains an advantage. Treat this as a possession change.

## Drop Ball

The mechanics for performing a drop ball have changed in 2019, and no longer allow any number of players to be present. The referee needs to know current rules related to awarding a drop ball.

In general, the person designated to take the drop ball does so unobstructed; with opposing team players required to be at least 4 yards away.

When the drop ball is in the penalty area, it will be dropped for the defending team goalkeeper **regardless who had last possession.**

In all other cases the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball.

To drop the ball, the referee holds the ball at waist level and removes his/her hand letting the ball fall to the ground. Do not throw the ball to the ground!

If the ball does not touch the ground before being touched by a player, the drop ball is to be retaken.

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A goal cannot be scored directly from a drop ball. The ball must touch a second player to be a goal. If the dropped ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with

- a goal kick if it enters the opponents goal
- a corner kick if it enters the team's own goal.

## **Giving Required Distance on a Kick and Setting a Wall**

When taking a direct or indirect kick all opponents must remain at least 8 yards from the ball, unless they are on their own goal line between the goalposts.

Where three or more defending players form a wall, all attacking players must remain at least 1 yard from the wall until the ball is in play.

## **Not a Ball Person**

The objective for a referee at U10 is not only to polish officiating skills but also to get players to start doing the things [players should be doing](#) at this level. This includes:

- Having players retrieve the ball when it goes out of bounds.
- Getting players to place the ball at the location indicated for a kick to occur (whether it be a direct kick, goal kick, or corner kick).
- Getting the ball to half line and setup for a kick-off after a goal is scored.

## **Dealing with injuries**

The referee must show a sense of urgency/concern for players who might be injured or require attention during the match! He/she must get to a downed player quickly and assess if help is required, and call the coach/trainer onto the field if the situation warrants.

Don't worry about a coach or parent rushing onto the field if a player goes down. It's in a parent's nature to rush to their child! Just manage the situation!

When a coach enters the field to attend to a player, leave the scene, get the ball and determine where restart will occur. If need be, use the time to consult with the Referee Mentor if nearby. Staying on the scene may make you a target for questions, or rather a target for criticism.

## **Watching Players Before, During and After Play**

It's important to keep an eye on what players are doing away from the ball, lest something crazy happens.

- Don't watch the kicker; get to the drop zone where players will receive the ball.
  - After a goal, ensure players are setting up the ball for kickoff.
  - During a throw-in watch the players for foot faults and illegal throws - not movement of the ball. Although it is good to be close to observe play; being too close can limit how much you can see.
  - There will be some players more experienced than others who can dominate play. They, however, must not jeopardize the safety of the less experienced ones.
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## Heading the Ball and Possible Head Injuries (Concussions)

Players under the age of 11 years old are not allowed to intentionally head the ball!

If a player **intentionally** heads the ball **or attempts to head the ball**, the referee should treat it as dangerous play and award an indirect **free** kick to the opponent! If **the ball hits a players head** accidentally the referee should tell players to keep playing but stay alert for any sign of injury.

The referee must ensure a player is not affected by collisions to the upper body such as can occur as a result of hitting the goalposts, hitting the ground hard, head to head butts, hits from behind to name a few. If **a referee** suspects the player's actions have changed after an incident, he/she must halt the game and get the coach to ensure the player should continue! When in doubt ask the Referee Mentor to intercede!

Every referee must have read-up on available documentation on concussions and how to handle them!

## Slide Tackles

Slide tackles are considered dangerous play and not allowed at U10 **level**. If the referee observes a player use, **or attempt to use**, a slide tackle against a player with the ball **the referee** should **whistle** the foul and ensure the player knows **slide tackling** is not allowed.

A player can make a slide tackle like motion to make contact with the ball if no player is near!

## Officiating the match

The most important part of officiating is to be in the best position relative to play to be able to make the calls required but not be in the way. You should be able to do a self-assessment of your performance by asking:

- Do your signals for goal kicks, corner kicks, direct kicks and throw-in show confidence in your call? Am I talking to players ensuring they understand what I am signaling?
- Are players hearing your whistle? Are players responding to your whistle for fouls or the end of quarters? Is the whistle loud enough?
- Can they hear your whistle across the field? Coaches need to hear what is happening!
- Am I running and varying my position relative to play?
  - How can I possibly see the ball go out of bounds from where I was standing?
  - Am I so far away from the play that I cannot see what players are doing?
- How are the players/coaches accepting my comments/calls? Why?
- Am I letting a coach's comments affect what I call or do not call? Did I miss something?
- Am I calling fouls?
  - Was there handling? Or did the ball just hit the player's arms?
  - If there is a foul, call it! Realize that U10 players do fall a lot without a foul occurring.
  - Am I allowing larger or more experienced players to bully smaller /less experienced players? Watch for pushing and charging into players which are fouls.

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## Handling

Handling (aka Hand Ball), is probably the #1 foul you will see [at this level](#). IFAB rules focus on experienced players and introduces subtleties above the level of player understanding at beginner level.

The focus on calling a Hand Ball in NYSL is very basic. First if player deliberately extends hands to touch the ball then call it. If the ball hits the player's hands/arms by accident or the player reacts to defend themselves (with their hands) from ball coming at them, the referee should use their voice to [tell](#) players to continue playing. If this creates a dangerous situation then award an indirect kick going out...always favor kicking out of the goal area!

## Use of Red and Yellow Cards

Yellow cards are used to signal a caution has been given; red cards signal that a serious infraction has occurred requiring dismissal of that player, coach or other team official. Understanding when to use cards and the implication of receiving them is beyond the expectation for U10 beginning referees, coaches and players.

**Do not consider giving a yellow or red card at this level!**

Refer player behavioral issues to the respective coaches and or Field Director if they occur.

## After the game

Normally referees will need to keep track of the score, which player scored, and the time of the goal for their report. During the NYSL U10 game, however, you will only need to keep [track](#) of goals scored since the goal differential will determine when a team can add another player! Coaches report final scores to the league.

At the end of the game you should confirm the final score with both coaches since you will be contacted if there is any question about the score later in the week. Ensure you have player information for any injury- since you may need to submit an injury report.

The referee should give the Referee Mentor the final score count he has recorded.

The referee should ensure he has the date of the match on his score sheet and retain it in home records at least until he receives payment for the games. This ensures he/she can answer any questions about scores that might come from league officials.

**When arriving home be sure to sanitize your whistle, cards, etc. and ensure the clothes you wore to officiate are washed right away.**

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## FINALLY

You are just starting your officiating career. You're not expected to know everything!

We ([Mentors](#)) are here to help you through your experiences. Talk to us! Ask! Have Fun!

Any questions can be referred to the following Mentors:

- Joe Kurta [jkurta45@comcast.net](mailto:jkurta45@comcast.net)
- Rick Neckorcuk [rickneck@comcast.net](mailto:rickneck@comcast.net)
- Roger Hodgkiss [RKH0902@comcast.net](mailto:RKH0902@comcast.net)
- Ed Jonson [jonsonec@myfairpoint.net](mailto:jonsonec@myfairpoint.net)
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