

BC Soccer

Return to Play Phase 2



Referee FAQ

Introduction

On August 24, 2020, BC Soccer was pleased to share its Return to Play Plan – Phase 2 to members and affiliated clubs. More detailed information regarding the organization of soccer activity in Phase 2 Return to Play can be found here:

<https://bcsoccer.net/return-to-play-information>

With game play resuming shortly, there have been many questions specifically related to refereeing. This document aims to provide clarification to questions received.

CONTENTS

TOPIC	PAGE
Clarification for Kick-ins Replacing Throw-ins	4
Cohorts and Travel	6
Referee Equipment	8
Arrival to the field and Pre-Game Procedures	9
Spitting, Nose-clearing, Coughing and Sideline Distancing – What are referees responsible for?	10
Other Questions	13

Clarification for Kick-ins Replacing Throw-ins

Kick-ins are to be managed as an indirect free kick. This means:

- A kick-in is awarded to the opponents of the player's team that last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air.
- The principles of Offside only apply to U11+
 - **Remember:** Offside does apply if a player receives a ball directly from a kick-in!

Procedure

- The ball shall be kicked in from the point where it left the field of play.
- The ball must be stationary (stopped).
- The ball must be placed ON or BEHIND (within 6 inches) of the touchline.
- The player taking the kick in must face the field of play.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked, clearly moves and crosses over the touchline.
- At the taking of a kick-in, all opponents must be at least 5 meters from the ball.

Clarification for Kick-ins Replacing Throw-ins

A goal CANNOT be scored directly from a kick-in

- If the ball enters the opponent's goal, a goal kick is awarded;
- If the ball enters the player's goal who is taking the kick-in, a corner kick is awarded.

OFFENCES AND SANCTIONS

- If the kick-in is not taken correctly, it is retaken by the opposing team.
- If a player while correctly taking the kick-in deliberately kicks the ball at an opponent in order to play the ball again, but not in a careless or reckless manner, or using excessive force, the referee allows the play to continue.
- If the player taking the kick-in touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team from where the offence occurred.
 - If the player taking the kick-in touches the ball a second time with their hands, a direct free kick or penalty kick (if happened inside the penalty area) shall be awarded to the opposing team (excluding U6-U10).
- An opponent who unfairly distracts or impedes the kicker (including moving closer than 5 meters to the place where the kick-in is to be taken) is cautioned for unsporting behavior. If the kick-in has already been taken, an indirect free kick is awarded.

Cohorts and Travel

Do referees need to be included in cohorts?

As stated in [BC Soccer's Return to Play Phase 2 Guidelines](#), “If using referees, it is recommended if possible, to assign a referee(s) to a specific cohort and avoid having that individual assigned to multiple cohorts.” Given the number of games, number of registered referees, and geography this is provided as a recommendation; however is not required.

Note: Referees are included in the 50-person gathering limits on field but do not need to be included in the cohort.

If a player is also a referee, can the player be in a cohort with their team and still referee?

Generally speaking, referees are not in physical contact with players; therefore, there isn't anything preventing an individual to participate in a cohort as a player and still officiate matches. Guidance is to limit activity; therefore, wherever possible, referees are encouraged to limit their interaction. If referees are also players, they are encouraged to officiate within the geographic boundaries of their cohort as a player if possible and ensure they observe distancing whenever possible; for example, during pre-game check in.

Cohorts and Travel

How far can a referee travel to officiate a match?

The BC health authority guidance is to limit nonessential travel; therefore, it is recommended that referees are assigned to officiate matches following the guidance provided for teams:

- Youth games, within Youth District and/or neighbouring Youth District geographical boundaries.
- Adult games, within the Adult League.

Can a referee officiate in youth games and adult games (and/or multiple leagues)?

Yes, referees may officiate in more than one youth or adult league so long as the number of cohorts and travel is as limited as possible. Referee assigning is not done centrally by BC Soccer, therefore, ideally youth and adult referee assigners will work together to find reasonable assigning solutions. A consolidated list of public-facing referee assigner contact information that BC Soccer has record of is provided here:

<https://bcsoccer.net/referee-rules-regs>

Referee Equipment

What is the general guidance for referee equipment?

Referees should not share water bottles (labeling is encouraged), whistles, towels, etc. Referees are encouraged to continue practicing good hygiene habits.

Can flags be shared between referees?

If a referee has their own flag, they are encouraged to bring and use their own flag at games where they are in the role of Assistant Referee. Flags may be shared; however, must be sanitized before and after use. Referees may use gloves if they prefer. If an Assistant Referee or Club Linesperson is not comfortable using a “shared flag” they may use their arm to signal, or, may use a brightly coloured pinny or shirt of their own in replace of a flag.

Arrival at the field and Pre-Game Procedures

Where does a referee enter/leave the field and where does a referee put their belongings during the match?

Referees are to enter and leave the field following the facility's guidelines and/or plan provided by the local club/district/league for which they are officiating the match. If there is not a designated area for a referee to put their belongings during the match, placing them to the side of the field at the halfway line, which is common practice, is recommended.

What changes for Pre-Game team checks?

For Pre-Game team checks, referees are advised to practice distancing measures from team officials and players. Referees are not to shake hands with team officials or players and should remind teams that there will be no pre or post game handshake, fist bumps, etc. When reviewing player ID cards and rosters/team lists, if referees are not comfortable handling player ID cards, team officials can hold the cards to assist.

Can referees still use a coin toss to determine which team will kick-off at the start of the game?

Yes, referees can still conduct the standard coin toss procedure. Referees are to bring and use their own coin and upon flipping/tossing the coin, let it fall to the ground or catch it themselves.

Spitting, Nose-clearing, Coughing and Sideline Distancing – What are referees responsible for?

If a player spits or clears their nose at a match, is the referee responsible to manage this?

Based on guidance from Canada Soccer, referees are only able to address spitting when directed at someone, not when spitting or nose clearing occurs when not directed at someone.

If a player/participant does spit or clear their nose, the coach is required to substitute the player as quickly as possible at the next stoppage. The player must sit on the sideline for a minimum of 15% of the total game duration. (For example, the match duration is 50 minutes per the BC Soccer Small Sided Soccer Development Manual, the substituted player would need to sit for 7.5 minutes) This is up to the coach to manage.

Spitting, Nose-clearing, Coughing and Sideline Distancing – What are referees responsible for?

If a player “coughs at” another player or referee, what does the referee do?

If a player deliberately coughs at, or on, another player or the referee, following IFAB’s Laws of the Game, the referee shall use their discretion to determine if an offence/misconduct took place. If a referee determines that an offence took place, they may act according to the severity of the offence in their opinion. This means that the referee may caution the player with a yellow card as “unsporting behaviour”, or, they may send off the player via a red card for “using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures” and/or “spitting” if the offence was deemed to be more egregious .

Spitting, Nose-clearing, Coughing and Sideline Distancing – What are referees responsible for?

Is the referee responsible to ensure that players and coaches are following the distancing requirements on the sidelines?

Team Officials are responsible to manage their sideline, not the referee. As it relates, referees are to be lenient with team officials and players who may be standing outside the standard or identified technical area. Per normal requirements, team officials are to ensure they and their players are conducting themselves in a responsible manner.

Other Questions

Can referees officiate if they haven't taken the Refresher Clinic?

Similar to past practice, some referees may not have had a chance to attend the Refresher Clinic; however, are assigned games. Referees can officiate these games; but are encouraged to take the annual Refresher Clinic as soon as possible/available.

It is recommended that referees to stay up to date with the Laws of the Game by reviewing IFAB's Changes and Clarifications. The 2019/2020 Changes and Clarifications (for Interior referees) and the 2020/2021 Changes and Clarifications (for Coastal referees) are available on BC Soccer's website: <https://bcsoccer.net/referee-rules-regs>

Other Questions

What if we don't have enough officials for our match?

BC Soccer's Rules & Regulations state:

RULE 14 – REFEREES

c) No person shall officiate as a referee in any competition under the sanction or jurisdiction of BC Soccer who is not on the official list of BC Soccer, but if for unforeseen circumstances a referee on the official list is unable to act, the teams affected shall agree on some other person in the emergency

The pandemic is no doubt an unforeseen circumstance; therefore, there may be challenges securing enough referees to officiate all matches. If there is no referee assigned to a match or if a referee is unable to attend, unless otherwise specified in league rules, members, affiliated organizations and teams are encouraged to uphold the 'spirit of the game' and agree on another person to officiate the match. As we continue to return to play, the focus is on being able to play and enjoy the game.

Other Questions

What is the guidance for Head Referees providing referee specific training sessions?

Head Referees are encouraged to continue providing training sessions via Zoom conferencing, or, with distancing measures following Phase 1 Guidelines. This will continue to limit contact/interaction. Some on-field activities are provided in the document:

[BC Soccer Return to Play Plan - Phase 1 - sample referee training sessions](#)

What is the guidance for conducting referee mentorships in Phase 2?

If mentors are also registered referees, utilizing them as a referee is the first priority; however, if there are mentors available, conducting mentorships is encouraged so long as the mentor and referee prepare and debrief using distancing measures.