



The Flag and Whistle

Newsletter of the Soccer South Bay Referee Association

October 31, 2007

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ED REACTS TO COACH'S COMPLAINTS TINO MAKES A PUBLIC CONFESSION SSBRA REFEREE COMMITS SERIOUS ON-FIELD ERROR

In spite of a remarkably bad traffic day, even for L.A., the library of North High School was filled on October 30 for the monthly meeting, with 54 Members signing the attendance sheet (it seemed that there were more there than that). The most interesting event of the evening was a discussion led by President **Ed McClure** about a highly critical complaint received by a coach of the South Bay Peninsula Soccer League (men over 40 division), which referred to one of our referee crews in an unfavorable way, to say the least. Ed declined to read the text of the complaint, but talked about it and the active response of the Board to what was considered unwarranted and inaccurate statements therein. This led to a long and serious discussion on how to handle this group of players and coaches, with the long-term Members sharing their collective years of experience with the group. In particular, **Vince Delmonico** stood up and made a number of useful and insightful comments, offering the advice that the referees should show confidence and decisiveness from the time they arrive on the field. He told us that we should never let ourselves be intimidated, and to dial 9-1-1 as soon as things get out of hand. In this way the players will be more inclined to accept the newer referee's decisions, as they are of the referees they have grown to know through prior games. Many others shared their outlook about this division, which is probably the hardest to handle that SSBRA is currently working games for, but much of the advice would also apply to other matches. The

consensus seemed to be that the best way to handle and avoid bad situations is to project confidence in yourself, call the games tight, and issue cards liberally. Along with Vince, **Derek Taylor, Mike Takaki, Steve McCall, Jon Ziegler, Keith Sena, James Lucania, George Heggie, Gabriel Goldsman, Art Frankel, Joe Amalfitano** and **Tino Perone** all offered their perspectives and thoughts.

In other business, Assignor **Bill Cook** reminded us of the Wednesday 6 PM deadline to accept matches, and he had CSL books to pass out. Treasurer **Tom Mallen** told us that there was \$8199.23 in the bank, even though the last of the summer tournaments had been paid (checks to be mailed later to those not present at the meeting) as well as the fees for the Manhattan Beach 7v7 games (which are likewise in the mail if you were not there). Secretary **Warren Howell** reported that, as part of the dues payment audit task, 27 Members have been dropped from the roster because of various personal reasons, and he was still working to determine the status of 12 more. In all, there are 170 names on the list. Warren then reminded us to share rides, particularly with youth and new Members, and encouraged everyone in the Association to call your partners, a Board Member, or someone, if you have transportation problems or any questions. And especially, be aware of any youth Members on your crew (some of which are young as 15), so they do not get stranded after the last match of the day. He then recognized a new Member who was at a meeting for the first time, **Jeff Pedersen**, who stood up and told us a little about himself, and Jeff received a warm SSBRA welcome from the Members in return.

Using humor as a teaching tool, Ed M. showed us a slide show he put together with **Ralph Quiroz** that displayed assistant referees acting badly. From there, he then went on to explain the right way to do things, and a general discussion began, with **Larry Savell, Kiku Annon, Keith Sena, Dan Damian, Lee Jordan, Tom Mallen, James Lucania, Derek Taylor**, and others, all participating in the conversation. Then with Training **Heidi Garlich** leading the way, another group discussion started, touching on how to signal a goal, offside, and how to handle injuries. **Tino Perone** generously stood up during the meeting and told of an incident at a division 1 college match he was helping officiate the prior weekend, during which the crew made the right call but got the re-start wrong in a quick and confusing situation. Helping keep the ideas and words flowing were Kiku, Dan D., Steve M. and Vince.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, October 16, 2007

- Dues were discussed, Warren is handling with Tom
- Warren will mention ensuring youth Members have rides etc. at the monthly meeting
- It was decided to suspend a Member for bad conduct, Warren to make the notification
- Development of the new ranking system is in progress and was discussed
- A problem between a referee and coach/spectators was reviewed
- It was reported that a Member had some items taken from his bag at a recent match
- The Members should be reminded that if there is a problem, please let the Board know about it
- SSBRA referees are being sent to premier games in Orange County after a several year absence
- The Manhattan Beach 7v7 contract was signed and the games are going well
- There was a general discussion about more artificial fields coming and that they may be cheaper than real grass
- Ed is talking directly to the President of the OC Association about money owed for summer tournaments
- Recent rained out games and a complaint received about them were reviewed
- Need for a backup assignor was discussed a little and then tabled
- Ed will make a presentation at the October meeting about AR training

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, October 30, 2007

- Formally approved Jeff Pedersen and **Jared Syverson** as new Members
- Recent controversy with SBPSL O/40 coach and SSBRA responses were reviewed
- A problem with a Member was discussed and action plan decided on
- Santa Monica wants a formal hearing about a game incident

- Sportsmanship award process to be changed by Ed
- Premier games are done for the season. They went well and there may be more next year

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING

THE NEXT MEETING IS ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2007 (THE TUESDAY AFTER THANKSGIVING), AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE LIBRARY OF NORTH TORRANCE HIGH SCHOOL, 3620 182ND ST. (AT YUKON - SEE SSBRA.ORG FOR DETAILED MAPS), WHEREIN BEVERAGES AND FOOD ARE PROHIBITED BY THE SCHOOL. AGENDA TO INCLUDE ASSOCIATION BUSINESS, TRAINING, SPEECHES BY THE BOARD, AND THE SHARING OF THOUGHTS BY THE WISE AND OPINIONATED MEMBERSHIP.

Thought of the Month (attributed to Yogi Berra)

“Give it 100% in the first half of the game. And if that is not enough, then in the second half give what you’ve got left.”



Foul? What Foul?? (recent MLS action)

This is How the Pros do it (submitted by Tom Bobadilla)

...ussoccer.com tagged along with U.S. Soccer Full Time Referees **Baldomero Toledo** and **Ricardo Salazar**, who were part of the four-man crew for the first leg of the MLS Eastern Conference Semifinals between the Chicago Fire and D.C. United on Oct. 25 at Toyota Park. What follows is an in-depth look at match day for an officiating crew.

PRE-GAME

5 p.m. – The fourth official for the match, Salazar, is a local Chicagoan, so he was kind enough to pick up the rest of the crew at their hotel and carpool to Toyota Park.

6 p.m. – The entire crew arrives at the stadium about two hours before kickoff and heads to the officials' locker room located nearby the Fire and visitor (D.C. on this night) locker rooms. The locker room isn't big by any standards, but includes a few lockers, a small bench, a couple individual shower stalls, bathroom stalls and sinks. There are also a variety of drinks (water and Gatorade) and snacks (granola, Gatorade bars and gum) laid out on the table, all of which are provided by the Fire. Salazar: "Depending on the venue, the snacks get better or worse. This is pretty good."

6:10 p.m. – After dropping off their belongings in the locker room, the officials make their way to their workplace for the night – the field. As a group, they inspect every aspect of the pitch, spending about 20-30 minutes checking a range of items and getting a feel for where they'll be earning their paychecks for 90 minutes. Here's a quick rundown of some of their inspections:

- Look for holes or depressions in the field itself that could cause injury to players. Also, remove any rocks, twigs or other debris.
- Make sure the nets are securely fastened to the goal posts, and make sure the nets themselves don't have any rips or holes.
- Correct placement of corner flags.
- Make sure field is lined properly. "This is especially important when you're playing in stadiums where they also play American football," said Salazar.
- Since this was a ESPN2 match, the crew also had to check the microphones placed around the field, especially near the goals to make sure nothing would interfere with the play on the field.

6:50 p.m. – After checking the field, the referees return to the locker room and start changing into their uniforms. There's a smattering of small talk, just like any locker room, mostly about the MLS playoffs, but also about their families and other non-soccer topics.

6:55 p.m. – Salazar takes a moment to fill out the envelopes for the crew's complimentary tickets, writing the names of the recipients so they can be left at will call. Each referee gets two tickets and, just like the players, they get requests from friends and family. While he's filling them out, Salazar actually gets a call from his friend wondering if he can get another ticket. "I'll see what I can do," he says.

7:01 p.m. – Team officials from both Chicago and D.C. come in with their uniforms for the match. The Fire will be in all red, United in all black. Both teams present similar grey goalkeeper jerseys, which is not allowed according to the letter of the law, so the Fire are asked to change (home team has to make the change). Toledo explains the reasoning: "Let's say for some reason one of the 'keepers come up for a free kick or corner kick in an attempt to score a late goal. If they both end up challenging for the ball, it makes it difficult to decipher between the two in instances of a hand ball or a foul."

7:03 p.m. – Team line-ups arrive. Toledo looks them over to make sure everything is filled out properly before handing them off to Fire personnel, who will bring them upstairs for the media and stadium announcer.

7:04 p.m. – Fire equipment manager brings in the other jersey option – a light blue with yellow trimming – which is approved by the referees.

7:08 p.m. – Salazar checks the pressure of the game balls one final time.

7:10 p.m. – The crew gets together and talks quickly about a few scenarios to be prepared for, and players to pay attention to, during the match. Sometimes they'll spend more time on it in the hours before the match, but fortunately in this instance they arrived into Chicago yesterday and were able to get together and go over their pre-match preparation a day early.

Toledo explains while treating everyone fairly, there are a number of players they will need to be prepared to possibly deal with more than others as these specific players have personalities that tend to be expressed more than others. "That doesn't mean we go into the game saying we're going to call a foul or not call a foul when a certain player goes to the ground, but we know his style of play and need to be aware of it and work together to make sure we make the right call," explains Toledo. They also go over instances on the field that could happen, such as yellow and red cards, or on how they'll communicate on certain calls to make sure every call is as accurate and fair as possible. It's basically a three-minute refresher course. "I know they all know this stuff, but we need to be ready to react. If we're ready, then that will make for a better game," says Toledo.

7:20 p.m. – The officials head back to the field for their warm-ups alongside the players from both teams. For about 15-20 minutes they jog along the sideline and stretch near the midfield stripe. Just like the players, they need to be warmed up so they don't pull something.

7:40 p.m. – Back in the locker room, they finish up their last-minute preparations. One of the assistants puts on a long sleeve shirt underneath his official shirt as the temperature steadily dropped since they first arrived. Unfortunately, they'll have to deal with cold legs at least for the first couple minutes as they're required to wear shorts. Except for the fourth official, that is: Salazar throws on a warm-up jacket and pants and makes a joke about how he'll "be nice and warm."

7:45 p.m. – Dressed in their yellow uniforms tonight, the officials take one last mirror check and comb their hair, tuck in their shirts and even put on some lip balm. They give each other a hard time since they're worrying about their appearance, but they know they've got to look presentable – especially for a nationally televised match.

7:49 p.m. – A buzzing sound can be heard in the locker room as the linesmen check to make sure the alert system on their flags are working. When they make a call, they push a button on the handle and it buzzes the device strapped to Toledo's arm to alert him. Salazar also checks the electronic substitution board one last time.

7:51 p.m. – A Fire employee alerts the crew that it's time to go and they head out to the tunnel along with the players.

7:54 p.m. – The referees lead the players out and line-up at midfield.

7:58 p.m. – Anthem is played, players take their positions.

8:07 p.m. – The teams and Toledo wait for the signal from the TV broadcast to begin. A few minutes later, Toledo blows the whistle to start the match.

THE GAME

Here are some first-half incidents Toledo and his crew have to deal with: early on in the match, **Blanco** is already ornery and complains about not getting a call near the sideline. Toledo and his linesman communicate well with each other and do their best to explain to the displeased Blanco that there was no foul.

- **Chris Rolfe** pounces on a loose ball and buries it into the upper-left corner for the game's opening goal.
- In the 31st minute, a bit of an unusual situation occurs when a Fire clearance hits the sky camera. Toledo correctly stops play and conducts a drop ball at the site of the incident.
- A couple minutes later, Cuauhtemoc Blanco and **Ben Olsen** get into a bit of a scuffle. Toledo handles the situation calmly and is able to diffuse the fracas before it can escalate.

8:55 p.m. – Toledo blows the halftime whistle and everyone gets a respite from the weather as they head to the locker rooms.

HALFTIME

At halftime, Toledo and his crew talk about a myriad of situations.

On yellow cards: Toledo goes over the yellow cards he handed out, explaining the reasoning to his crew so everyone is on the same page. They also make sure the correct player was marked on the halftime match report.

On managing the players: Player management comes up early in the conversation as well. Toledo says he feels they've communicated well to make sure they're handling all the players fairly, while doing their best to make the correct calls.

On the ball hitting the camera: Toledo says he actually didn't see the ball hit the camera, but noticed the odd movement the ball took on the way down. One of his linesman was all over it, and quickly signaled Toledo on what happened so he could make the appropriate call (a drop ball).

On the conditions: With the field being slippery, Toledo reminds the crew they need to make sure they keep the players safe as there is a concern of players sliding into tackles more. Also he says, "Don't let the players use the slippery field as an excuse either for a reckless tackle."

On things they missed: The crew openly talks about things it may have missed, or possibly should have called a different way. A specific example is when Toledo calls a goal kick incorrectly (it should have been a corner kick). One of the assistant referees had a better view of the play, but didn't assertively alert Toledo in time. Toledo: "We've got to talk about these things as we don't want to miss them again. We always have to improve."

On the second half: Similar to what is happening in the Fire and United locker rooms, the crew encourage each other before they head back out there. "Keep the game in control and be ready for anything in a game like this," says Salazar.

9:01 p.m. – The crew is informed they need to go out in about one minute.

9:02 p.m. – After a few last words of encouragement, Toledo leads the crew out of the locker room and back onto the field for the second half.

SECOND HALF

9:08 p.m. – Toledo blows the whistle to start the second half.

There are two hand ball incidents in the second half that Toledo and his crew have to deal with:

- The first comes just four minutes in when United gets a free kick about 30 yards out near the right corner of the penalty area. **Gomez** rips a shot into the wall that hits **Chad Barrett** in the arm, with him possibly in the penalty area. Toledo and his crew do not call a hand ball despite the complaints of the D.C. players.
- The second comes in the 86th minute when the ball hits **Wilman Conde's** arm during a challenge with **Jaime Moreno** inside the penalty area. Toledo calls Moreno for a foul on the play (see his explanation below).

9:59 p.m. – Toledo blows the final whistle on Chicago's 1-0 victory against D.C.

END OF MATCH

10:02 p.m. – The crew is back in the locker room and there's some backslapping and handshaking for a job well done. Toledo: "Good job guys. That was not an easy game."

10:03 p.m. – Not a ton of time to feel too good about their performance as they still have some duties to finish up, such as going over the official match report. Toledo and the rest of the crew each take a turn eyeing over the report to make sure everything from yellow cards, goal scorers and times, and substitutions are accurate. Toledo signs the report to make it official.

10:05 p.m. – The referee match assessor comes into the locker room and talks with the crew about the entire match. Here are some of the incidents they touched on from the second half.

- The assessor asks about the possible hand ball in the wall by Barrett, Toledo says his view was blocked ("I didn't see it, so I didn't call it"); but that he realized something had happened due to the D.C. player's reaction. The linesman on that side of the field tells Toledo he saw it, but felt it was an incident where he had his arms crossed across his chest and was just protecting himself, therefore he didn't raise his flag. It's agreed it was the proper call.

- As for the one on Conde, Toledo explains the foul (a careless elbow) by Moreno was committed first, which in turn caused the hand ball. He adds: “I’d like to see the tape though. I think I made the right call, but I’ll check it out.”
- Player management once again is a topic of conversation. The crew feels like they were fair in how they handled each player.

10:30 p.m. – They finish their recap of the match and take a quick shower as they get ready to go back to the hotel.

10:45 p.m. – With all their belongings packed up, Toledo and his crew leave the stadium. Overall, Toledo says he was happy with the crew’s performance. “We tried to manage the game as well as we could. It was not an easy game, but I felt good. I think we did well.”



Maybe This Will Help (recent MLS booking)

Don’t Try This at Home, nor on the Pitch Either (submitted by W. Howell)

It was a Sunday morning, and **George Heggie** was getting ready to do the honors as center referee in a CSL GU14 match, the first of a short 2-game set at Syd Kronenthal’s park in Culver City. There to help out were **Juan Carlos Ruiz** and the referee some folks call Bluto. Not trusting George to hold the money, Bluto had collected the game fees from the team managers, and the referees were waiting on the field by the touchline for the players to come onto the pitch. Growing impatient during the delay, George suddenly demanded that Bluto divide up the referee fees for the first match right then and there, before it had even started. Used to his ways and trusting to memory, Bluto handed Juan the AR fee of \$28 and gave George \$32. Crisis over, a few minutes later the teams were ready and the match began. But then Bluto started having a feeling while standing on the line that something was wrong, and used a lull in the action to check the fee schedule. Tragically, he determined that the correct center referee fee was not \$32 but was in fact \$36 – Bluto had short-changed a Scotsman! Ignoring the action on the pitch for the rest of the half, Bluto had to devise a scheme to make the money right in a way that would avoid any ugliness. Noticing that Juan was a strong and strapping young man that could probably be depended on to intervene if violence erupted, Bluto came up with an idea. At half time, with Juan nearby, he explained the situation to George (who had not noticed the shortfall), and handled him the difference due. One could see that this triggered an internal struggle in our old friend, as his well-known good nature did battle with centuries of breeding, cultural background and strict early childhood upbringing. Thankfully, in the end, George’s natural kindness and good-spirits won out, and he accepted the situation graciously. But, just to make sure, Bluto handed George the fee for the second game too,

in the amount of \$23 for a BU12 AR, even though we were only at halftime of the first match. Mollified, George then asked Bluto to pay Juan right then for the second game too, a demand that a startled Bluto declined. With this episode out of the way, the referee team was able to turn their attention back to the action on the pitch, and all went well for the remainder of the morning.

Quote of the Month (by **Juan Carlos Osorio**, Chicago Fire coach, on MLS officiating)

“I just can’t hold it any longer. It’s really, really bad.”

Meanwhile, in the Other Football World (news article)

TEMPE, Ariz. -- A fight caught on surveillance tape between a pair of coaches in a youth football league heated up when it spilled from the field into a parking lot and one of the coaches' family members became involved, Tempe police said. The confrontation happened on Oct. 13 during a Maricopa Youth Football League game at Tempe High School between its 11- and 12-year-olds in the Pee Wee division Maricopa Matadors and The Dragonz, according to Tempe Police spokesperson Sgt. **Mike Horn**. Police said one of the coaches accused the other of running up the score in the game after the Dragonz beat the Matadors, 26-12 (editor’s note – is this running up the score?).

When both men had quieted down and went to leave, the Matadors’ coach, **David Kennedy**, boxed in Dragonz head coach **Terrance Payne Sr.** with his vehicle, Horn said. Police said a second fight broke out when Payne's wife and son flew into action, Horn said. "Someone said that as she was coming off the fight, there was a knife in her hand," according to Horn. No weapon was recovered, police said. The fight ended when a security guard intervened, Horn said.

Tempe police said they want the wife and son charged with aggravated assault. "It's an unfortunate situation," Horn said. "You've got a youth football game, and four people that kind of ruined the day for everybody," he said.

Member Larry Savell has pointed out that the new 2007 USSF Advice to Referees (ATR) has been posted and can be viewed and downloaded at the link below, as can a plethora of other articles and papers – enjoy!

<http://www.ussoccer.com/laws/index.jsp.html>



This Shows Why You Always Have to Pay Attention (submitted by W. Howell)

A pleasant October Saturday afternoon recently found the referee sometimes known as the Large Member at University High School in the center of a CSL GU11 match, with SSBRA Members **Marty Jeffers** and **Reza Pazirandeh** ably assisting. On the face of it, with one of the teams able to field only 9 players, you would think the center referee would have an easy time of it. But, truth be told, this was the fifth game of the day (and fourth center) for the L.M., who also had a U19 match scheduled to follow. Doing the best he could in a non-competitive match (the fully staffed team easily dominating play), he was dragging his body around the field in the first half when one of the field players ran up to tell him that the keeper for the short-handed team was bleeding. A few seconds thereafter, said keeper legally took the ball into her hands, and the L.M. ran over to see what was up. Sure enough, there was a small cut/scrape on the keeper's knee, and a little blood was running down. Not wanting to further reduce the short-handed side, the L.M. stopped the game in place and waved the coach onto the field to cover the bleeding with a band-aid. This only took a minute or so, and the L.M., satisfied that all was well, threw the ball ("dropped ball") to the keeper so she would have it back in her hands again. The well-trained GU11 goalkeeper then knew what to do, and gave the ball a remarkably hard kick for her age. Alas, the L.M had only limped off a yard or two, and the ball, with a loud "thump," hit him squarely in the back. It then rebounded high into the air, and the keeper ran over and caught it in her hands on the fly. At this point the keeper went into an uncontrolled fit of laughter - she was barely able to stand up due to the perceived hilarity of the situation, a state the L.M. had heard of but not actually seen before. She was not the only one who found all this amusing, as loud guffaws came over the field in waves, with the L.M likewise being able to see the humor in the situation. But, in all the merriment, the L.M. recognized that there was a problem. The keeper had released the ball from her hands and taken it back again into her hands after it had bounced off the referee, without another player touching the ball in-between. So, in theory the L.M. was obligated by the Laws of the Game to blow the whistle for an IFK in favor of the fully staffed team, in the short-sided team's penalty area. However, it seemed that the referees were the only ones there who knew this, and the L.M., not wanting to seem like a bad sport, was loath to make the call, and kept his whistle silent. After about 15 – 20 seconds (another violation) and assurances to the player's questions that the referee was uninjured by the blow, the keeper put the ball safely back in play, with the L.M. this time being careful to stand to off to the side away from the path of the ball.

At half-time this play was the main subject of the referee's conversations of course, with agreement that the call was the right one even though it was a clear violation of the Laws. It was also agreed that it was a good thing that the L.M. was not being assessed on this GU11 match, as he would have failed such an assessment, with said failure no doubt putting his ranking in the receptacle for the rest of his career. Regardless, the match eventually ended with the fully staffed team easily winning, several goals to none, and everyone walking off shaking their heads and laughing about Thumper, the Referee who could not get out of the way.