

My Pre-Game Instructions with Match Official Team – 2026

Thanks for being here in the Officials team today. Let's have **FUN** and give these teams our **BEST**. Let's work together and keep **COMMUNICATING**. (Thumbs up and back regularly, mimic signals if I don't see one).

Most important thing for you today is OFFSIDE. [I will go with your calls.] Stay with 2nd to last defender or the ball at all times and be patient to confirm Active Play and Challenge. Remember that a deliberate save keeps the phase going. When you put your flag up keep it up (and Keep it up unless defence gets it past half with control.) Three **special** cases here: **wait** to give keeper an advantage to pick up the ball; **early** if there is any chance of attacker/keeper collision; **early** if there is no other player close to the ball. If you are holding off and it messes up, then flag up.

Ball OUT of PLAY, if close and you are sure, then straight to signal. Otherwise look at me, indicate what you think (flag in hand but low), then follow me. If you are not sure flag up, I will decide.

FOULS, you can call when they are close to you (15-20m) or if I clearly cannot/have not seen it. Give me first opportunity in the box and be sure 110%. When signal is recognized give me the direction for re-start. If it for YELLOW give me a pat on the chest. If it is for RED give me a pat on the hip. For both tell me jersey colour and number. We will work out the paperwork later. You can help set distance for 10 yards (9.13m) if you are close. If you are hassled by players, coaches or parents let me know. Referees have cards/processes for that.

If there is a GOAL then please show a short sprint towards centre. If you DO NOT agree for the goal (not over the line, offside, touched any hand (intended or not) or foul, then flag up (and keep it up). **Do NOT let me restart without us talking!** Let's get it right. **Special** is if you saw the ball go in the net but it came out quickly then stand your ground with flag up waving, when I stop play give the run.

For SUBSTITUTIONS bench side A/R or myself will supervise the transition. I will give you time to get back to position. Signal the substitution, when recognized hold the substitution signal more comfortably, then flag down when complete. Also give a thumbs-up when you believe the substitution is complete. Formally, they are off before the others on. They can be off anywhere, they come on close to half on bench side.

For CORNER KICKS and THROW-INS, give players room by stepping back. Let's try to get play re-started but blatant bad throws are to be called back (lifting feet, one hand etc.).

If there is a PENALTY KICK then please position yourself at the intersection of the Goal Area and the Goal Line. Watch for keeper on his line (one foot on line or small steps off accepted) and ball completely over the goal line. If Keeper went off his line and a goal was not scored hold your position. Remember encroachment needs to have impact.

If there is a CONFRONTATION, whoever is bench side watch both benches and keep them there. Record any players, colour and numbers, that leave the bench or provoke the situation. Write down what they said exactly. The non-bench A/R needs to get in viewing distance and record colour and numbers of what you see and hear.

Let us start with a formal NET INSPECTION.

Special Notes for Junior Assistants

- If you are being heckled by parents or coaches let me know. Referees have tools for handling that.
- Net Inspection - Come to centre together, shake hands then jog to your near post. Inspect the leading edge on the near post, cross bar, far post and then the far side, back and near side of the net bottom from behind. From the Near Post then signal the other A/R you are good and then to 2nd to last defender position. Signal when you are ready to start time capture.
- Bench side please keep Running Time. Non-Bench please keep stop time for major stoppages.
- Finger count down indicating time remaining according to you. You may see fingers up by me indicating extra time.
- Let your flags flap all the time. It makes you easier to find and see.
- Stay with 2nd to last defender ALL THE TIME even if it means you don't see the ball out of play.
- Off-side body parts are Head, Shoulders, Torso, Hips, Legs and Feet. It does not include Hands or Arms.
- Whole ball over the Whole line before it is either out or a Goal.
- Don't try to stop the ball unless you are obviously way back from the field of play. We are a part of the field and we can keep the ball in play when it should have gone out. If it goes off us and gives advantage or changes possession it is to become a "drop ball"
- For off-sides I may over-rule your call or non-call. Don't be concerned. We will talk about why after the half.

Coaches Review

- Verify Age, League and Division to confirm Duration of the Half and stoppages for allowed Substitutions.
- Confirm colours and provision of a ball that can be evaluated and brought to proper hardness.
- Players may leave for substitutions from any boundary (put your arm up when you are off the pitch). Players enter for substitutions from team side at centre.
- Play this fields Whistle. [I try to have a distinctive Whistle in multi-field situations...]
- I indicate ball throw-in point. No 5-10 yard advances from that point, no changes especially inside the 18.
- I visibly count/show the 8 seconds when Keeper picks up the ball.
- When to expect Captains call followed by Card Checks and Equipment Checks.
- [A water break will be 2 minutes, at a natural stoppage in play, as close to the quarters as possible. Substitutions will be allowed.] *Personal: I consider water stopped time. My last whistle is 2 minutes after the half duration.*
- [(If weather(lightening/thunder) a consideration)] I will stop time and we will go to our cars or other safe place (under a tree is NOT a safe place). Do not have your team disappear when we break up. We will be wanting to continue play once it is safe, if possible. We will evaluate the situation 30minutes after our stoppage in our safe place. We will decide next steps then.

Captains / Players Direction

- No jewellery, earrings, wrist bands or necklaces. They are dangers to you and to your opposition.
- Hats and other headgear cannot have metal clips or clasps.
- Keepers, Use your hands to re-position any ball for Goal kick. Remember that the ball is in play when it is “Kicked and Moves”.
- I visibly count/show the 8 seconds when Keeper picks up the ball.
- Players may leave for substitutions from any boundary (put your arm up when you are off the pitch). Players enter for substitutions from team side centre.
- Play this fields Whistle. [I try to have a distinctive Whistle in multi-field situations...]
- I indicate ball throw-in point. No 5-10 yard advances from that point, no changes especially inside the 18.

Referees

Find this Sheet at: web.ncf.ca/bv178/RWHPreGame2026.pdf

Find Game Cards at: web.ncf.ca/bv178/GameCards4b.pdf

with Use guide at: web.ncf.ca/bv178/SoccerGameCardUse.html