

Safety First

-by Ed Rae, SDI

>Pre-Game: Arrive 30 minutes ahead of kick-off schedule. Walk the field.

- Inspect the field for hazards to safety; NEVER NEVER begin or play when goals are not anchored securely. Rocks, holes, glass, debris, etc. ,anything that might hurt anyone-remove or have fixed.
- Whether it is safe to play-or continue-your decision.
- Never, never play in thunder & lightning conditions!!!!!!

>Equipment. All of it - is it safe? Goals. Are they fastened, anchored to ground? Can they tip over in the wind, by leaning on them, or by pushing them? Wind or player action, will the goals stand? Be careful with small—sided game goals too.

- **> NEVER< NEVER >**begin or continue if goals are not solidly anchored to the ground. Check by tugging on them. If you cannot pull them over with a tug, then ok. Otherwise have home team coaches correct deficiency, have them anchored.
- Some teams do not have a 'home' field. They play at some other organization's field, with permission. Nevertheless, whoever is 'home' on the schedule, is responsible.
- Referees must refuse to referee at any game, at any time if goals are not anchored. Notify both coaches, then leave. Tell them why; 'the goals are not anchored fully, properly.' You will be paid. Hopefully refusal will cause reluctant 'home' responsible people to do the right thing; do their duty for safety. Safety is always first!
- Corner flag post safe? Be sure it is safe, no points or hard surfaces.

>Players.

- Check their personal equipment. No jewelry. No casts. No hard billed baseball caps- for goalkeeper or any other player. Religious or medical alert devices may be taped to body. Not allowed loose.
- Be certain all spectators remain at least one yard away from the touchline and friendly grandparents in lawn chairs are at least **two yards** away from touchlines. Allow no one to be behind the goals-friendly or not. **Distractions=unsafe**
- Allow no one to play who has sustained an injury in a prior game or just in general.

>Once the game begins: Protect keepers especially!!!!!! If any doubt-stop questionable play against keeper.

- They are exposed. Allow no one to charge them dangerously. Hand of keeper vs feet of attacker is not fair. Do not allow it.
- Forwards must control their runs-rain or shine. Out of control=danger. Shoulder charge is OK; anything else is probably dangerous; usually illegal; often harmful. Your job is safety.
- Protect keepers.!!!

>If players get hurt during the games:

- ++++**Stop play.** Wave touchline help onto field-immediately. Take the time - it is worth it. If anything else happens, err on side of safety every time. If it looks unsafe, it probably is. Stop play.
- When little kids fall down, not up right away-blow the whistle. Check them out.

Youth soccer is safety first. ***Fun = Safety***