

Hello All NSYSA Referees:

I have received a number of emails from various coaches, AGCs, registrars, team managers etc. enquiring the possibility of allowing their players to wear non-standard gears while they play in cold weather.

Rather than sending reply to each enquiry and make rulings on a case by case basis, I will like to share (repeat) the discussion that I had with BCSEA last season on this very subject with you all. To make sure that we are consistent among all the referees and the coaches, I will forward this email to all 3 soccer clubs for dissemination to all the coaches and team managers as well.

As far as player's uniform is concerned, we will use more common sense approach than FIFA Laws at the lower age groups. As we move up the ladder, we will then apply more FIFA Laws approach than common sense (meaning, as we move from U9 to U18, MSL and BCSPFL levels).

The 3 guiding principles of how to apply common sense approach are:

- (a) will the non-standard equipment cause danger to the player who is wearing it;
- (b) will the non-standard equipment cause danger to the opponents;
- (c) if the player's does not wear this non-standard equipment, does it mean that he/she will not get onto the field to play the game.

Once you are satisfied with the answers to the above 3 questions, let him/her play.

Let us use some specific examples and then apply the common sense approach to, say the U9/U10 games (they will be playing at Sutherland turf field this weekend, most likely at -2 to -3 degrees temperature) in the morning.

Can a player then wear: toques, gloves, long sleeves under armour jersey, long under armour pants or even sweatpants?

My suggestion is yes provided that the player's jersey, shorts and socks are still on the outside. As we move up the ladder, we will prefer these non-standard equipment be at least in black colour. As we move further up the ladder, the colour of the long sleeves under armour jersey must be the same colour of the dominant colour of the sleeves of the player's jersey (same apply to the under armour long pants), disallowing wearing of

sweatpants. To move even higher up, no long under armour pants is allowed (all under armour pants cannot cover the knees) etc. etc....

Having outlined the above, let me be clear that the above guidelines and principles should not be constituted as NSYSA or BCSA policy or rules and regulations on player's uniform. The reason is simple. If this becomes a policy, I won't be surprised that we will see some games with 22 players running around the field with toques and long pants. That is not our intent and we also don't want to see that happens on our fields. We just want to offer some degree of flexibility to the players and the referees so that they can enjoy the game that they love most, even in cold weather. We are trying to balance the 3 possible scenarios: parents pull out their children from the games whenever the weather is cold; players get sick and miss classes for the following week and players enjoy the game with certain standard that we all need to adhere to in any group sports.

I also would like to remind everybody on the guidelines of how to determine if the field is safe to play. For this weekend, pay special attention to the "turf" field guidelines (refer to your Referee Handbook, for the coaches, use your Coach Handbook - Referees' Perspective).

In addition to the guidelines, make sure that you apply your common sense when you make your decision. A cold turf field may be safe to play for a U18 boy but may not be so for a U9 girl etc. etc. Always discuss this with the 2 coaches before you make the final decision, particularly so for the younger refs as the coaches are usually more experienced in this regard (yes, you still have the final say and yes, you will still have to make the decision).

Good luck and be safe to all of you. Thanks a million for signing up your assignments given the forecasted cold weather condition this weekend.

Thanks.

Patrick Li
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NSYSA