

## Respecting Each other!

The players pictured here are playing in a match for charity, it's a "friendly"...



In an amateur indoor game there are usually around 15-30 players, 12-15 on the field at a time. As far as we can tell our local area is the ONLY place in the country that chooses to use only one referee. Everywhere else uses two referees for amateur games—and professional level indoor has two referees, an assistant referee, a reserve referee, two penalty box attendants, a scorekeeper, and two goal judges. Professional indoor soccer offers different challenges, but honestly is not harder to referee than some recreational games. Why it evolved that Oregon & Washington are virtually the only places asking one referee to control these games is lost to history, but your referee is literally doing the job of NINE people. The role of the referee is, by nature, reactive. A player challenges another player, we determine if a foul occurred, we determine if an advantage occurred, etc.

The players on the field in an indoor game =12-15 and your games the number of officials =1, the referee is less than 8% of the people on the field.

We have been asked to call games a bit more tightly. So you may notice this.

But again, we are ~8% of the people on the field, and that is right in the range of our affect on the game. Players act, we react. Players also react, it is the ongoing action/reaction between players (92% of the game) that is the tension-causing element of the game.

When we do referee trainings we often talk about the situation—a player challenges for the ball, the player with the ball gets knocked to the ground by a hard kick..

Situation 1—The referee blows the whistle and signals for a free kick. The player who fouled says, "sorry" and offers a hand up, the player who was fouled smiles and says, "Don't worry about it", the free kick is taken and everyone is happy.

Situation 2—The referee blows the whistle and signals for a free kick. The player who fouled says, "sorry" and offers a hand up. The player who was fouled jumps up and pushes the player who fouled him.

The play is the same. The reaction of the referee is (initially) the same. The action of the player who fouled was the same.

The only thing different in these two scenarios is the reaction of the player who was fouled. They made a choice—their choice was to not only get mad, but to retaliate. Depending on circumstances they will get a blue, yellow, or red card, or the other player will punch them and they will probably both get red cards.

Or both teams will decide that a bench-clearing brawl is the best way to handle it, or someone will take the player FROM THEIR TEAM and try to lead them away.

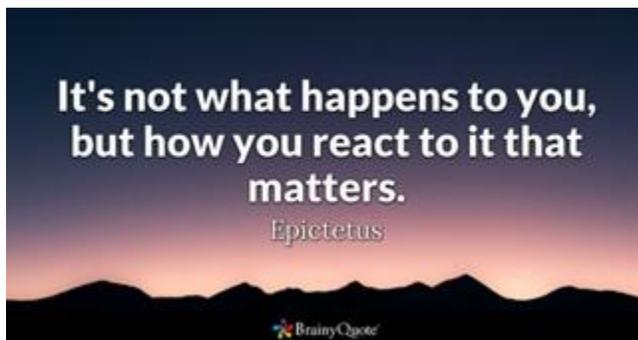
That's right, if you are really acting as a "peacemaker" the only player you should grab is your teammate. Otherwise you are escalating things and may be subject to penalties for being the "third person in" the confrontation.

Yes, we as referees have the whistle and we have cards, hopefully we will do our 8%, but that leaves the other 92% up to you, the players.

Players often think that fouls committed by they and their teammates are innocent mistakes and those committed by opponents, especially opponents with whom they have a history, are premeditated attacks.

Look, we're not here to tell you that those types of things never happen.

But most people at most games are there for the same reason as you are, to enjoy a game of soccer, get some exercise, visit with their friends, maybe have a beer, get up the next morning and go to work.



So you, yes, you—take responsibility for your 8%, play as hard as you like, but be respectful of your opponents, and if you think your opponent (s) are escalating things and you think the referee is not handling it appropriately—you can choose how you

react. We recommend a quiet word with the referee and perhaps choosing to de-escalate the situation from your side—unilaterally. Really! It works.

But you, the players collectively choose how the game goes, look at those scenarios again, you decide. If the referee is not doing their 8% please file a report and let us know, but if you have read this newsletter you will notice a theme,

The theme is that we, ALL OF US, should remember that we are human, we make mistakes, you miskick the ball, your opponent tries to take the ball from you, misses and kicks you instead, and yes, the referee makes some calls that you disagree with, the referee may be right or wrong, but just as you are not trying to miskick the ball, just as your opponent is trying to take the ball from you and score at the other end, but ends up tripping you instead. Mistakes. Humans.

All of these things happen, only you can control your reaction to them.