

### **Officiating: Is It Really Fair?**

The key questions that should be asked of officials **after** a match: What went wrong? Why did it go wrong? And most importantly, how can we fix it? However before we can ask those questions we must ask ourselves, was the officiating fair? Fair to whom: the players, the coaches, the spectators, or to the game itself? How about the officials themselves, is officiating fair to them, to their families?

There are too many non-match related decisions that impair the official's ability to function to the best of his/her abilities. They are expected to know which of the many different Rules and Laws of the Game are to be used for that particular match.

Furthermore, it is not uncommon for officials to be involved in matches that range in skill (very young youth to professional), age (6 to 50+), size of field, duration of match, and many other variables too numerous to list. In addition, the officials must take different fitness tests, different exams, attend numerous meetings, are assessed by different criteria, travel long distances, buy numerous uniforms, equipment, pay dues to several organizations and miss more family holidays and functions which lead to more problems.

It is not surprising then, that mistakes are made. To add to the stress and duress, today each decision is viewed numerous times in slow motion, analyzed over and over again after the fact.

In my opinion, officiating is not fair; it is not fair to the officials.