






Guideline (GUI)

Match Official Guideline

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Errors or Omissions

Big Country Soccer Association has provided this manual to the membership as a guide for the parents of players who are registered with Big Country Soccer Association. Any errors or omissions contained herein shall not supersede the by-laws, policies, procedures, or guidelines of the Association. Any changes to the manual shall be included in the next edition. The by-laws of the association supersede any guideline or policy should a conflict occur.

Document Revision History

Rev	Date	Description	Originator	Checker	Approver
00	26-Apr-2024	Document is published.	Duncan Hawkins	Ivo Toellner	Cody Graig
A	28-Dec-2023	This is the initial DRAFT of this Guideline document.	Duncan Hawkins	Cody Craig	Cody Craig

Current Revision Description

Section	Description



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1 Purpose

The purpose of this Guideline (GUI) is to assist Match Officials in their role with Big Country Soccer Association in supporting the proper conduct of Match Officials representing Big Country Soccer Association and the officiating of games that are scheduled and played in the communities of Big Country, Alberta.

This Guideline is meant to assist the Match Officials but not every situation can be included. If you are unsure, please feel free to contact Big Country Soccer Association Referee Coordinator or a member of the Big Country Soccer Association Board.

2 Scope

This document applies to the Match Officials that are assigned to represent Big Country Soccer Association. This document does not supersede Match Official requirements that are published by Alberta Soccer Association (ASA), Canada Soccer Association (CSA), or FIFA. In addition, this document only applies when games are scheduled and played by registered members of Big Country Soccer Association.

Note:

- i. Any Match Officials that officiate games for Big Country Soccer Association that are also officiating in other soccer associations will be responsible for and are required to be familiar with and adhere to any Match Official requirements published for those soccer associations.*

3 References

The following referenced documents are to be considered the latest edition and indispensable for the application of this document.

Table 1 – References

Document Number	Title
	FIFA Laws
	Canada Soccer Association (CSA)
	Alberta Soccer Association (ASA)
BCSA-POL-001	Big Country Soccer Association Policy
BCSA-POL-002	Zero Tolerance Policy
BCSA-POL-004	Harassment Policy
BCSA-POL-005	Concussion Policy



Document Number	Title
BCSA-POL-006	Lightning and Severe Weather Policy
BCSA-POL-007	Game Cancellation Policy
BCSA-POL-008	Match Official Code of Conduct
BCSA-POL-012	Smoke-Free Sports Policy
BCSA-POL-014	Rule of Two Policy
BCSA-POL-016	Friendly Fan Policy
BCSA-POL-017	Alcohol, Drugs, and Illicit Substances Policy
BCSA-POL-022	Field and Field Equipment Policy
BCSA-POL-024	Air Quality Guidelines Policy
BCSA-GOV-006	Big Country Soccer Association Discipline Committee Requirements
BCSA-FORM-008	Match Official No-Show Report
BCSA-FORM-015	Match Official Evaluation

4 Acronyms and Defined Terms

For this document, the following acronyms and terms apply.

4.1 Acronyms

Table 2 – Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ASA	Alberta Soccer Association
BCSA	Big Country Soccer Association
CSA	Canada Soccer Association
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association



4.2 Definitions

Table 3 – Definitions

Term	Definition
Registered Member	This is the community that is registered with BCSA to register their players to compete in the Association with other registered teams. These communities will have their players registered with Alberta Soccer Association.
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association (the international organization that controls the sport of football (soccer)).
Match Official (herein also known as a “referee”)	A Match Official is appointed to a soccer game to apply the FIFA Laws of the Game so that it is played fairly and safely. A Match Official must be confident, assertive, and fair in order to successfully control the game.

5 Responsibilities

- 5.1** The following list of responsibilities are not all encompassing. Additional responsibilities may be assigned out, as required, when there are tasks and/ or actions required to represent Big Country Soccer Association, its players, parents, coaches, and the governing soccer associations that Big Country Soccer Association is required to adhere to.
- 5.2** Big Country Soccer Association is responsible for the following in relation to this guideline:
- a) Enforce the Match Official Code of Conduct (*Ref: BCSA-POL-008*).
 - b) Ensure Match Officials are qualified by the governing body as a registered match Official and that the qualifications are up to date.
 - c) Ensure that all scheduled games for Big Country Soccer Association have an assigned Match Official present to officiate scheduled games.
 - d) Respond to all game reports that are presented to Big Country Soccer Association in which the Match Official has noted incidents and/ or decisions that may require further investigation and action.
 - e) Ensure that all updates to information Match Officials are required to know are provided to Match Officials for their review and updating, as necessary.



- 6.3** Registered Members Referee Coordinator and/ or designated representative is responsible for the following in relation to this guideline:
- a) Coordinating and scheduling of Match Officials to those games that are being played by the member.
 - b) Manage a list of registered Match Officials available for scheduling including having current copies of their certification on file.
 - c) Review all Match Official reports submitted and, if need be, forward the match reports to the Big Country Soccer Association Board when there is a report that requires further investigation and action.
 - d) Verify submitted Match Official payment details before a member sends payment to the Match Official.
 - e) Reply to any questions Match Officials may have in representing the games they were scheduled to officiate.
- 6.4** Match Officials are responsible for the following in relation to this guideline:
- a) Ensure their certification is current with a copy on file with Big Country Soccer Association and the Registered Members they are representing.
 - b) Ensure they have the appropriate officiating attire that properly identifies them as the official Match Official for the scheduled games they are officiating.
 - c) Ensure they have reviewed and are aware of associated policies, guidelines, and forms that are present in support of match officiating for Big Country Soccer Association.
 - d) Ensure that match reports are correctly completed, including as applicable, proper reporting of any incidents that is in violation of FIFA Laws, CSA, ASA, and BCSA.
 - e) Ensure payment requests are promptly sent to the Registered Member's Referee Coordinator with the game report for review and submission for payment.

6 Match Official Code of Conduct

- 6.1** Before the start of each soccer season, registered Match Officials are to review and sign off on the "Match Official Code of Conduct" (*Ref: BCSA-POL-008*) and submit the signed document to the Registered Members' Referee Coordinator and/ or designated representative.
- 6.2** The Referee Coordinator will keep the signed copy of the Match Official Code of Conduct on file.
- 6.3** Any questions or concerns regarding the Match Official Code of Conduct are to be submitted to the Big Country Soccer Association President and/ or Vice-President in writing.



7 Pre-Season Preparation

7.1 Note the following Match Official pre-season preparation guidelines:

- a) Inspect condition of match official attire and equipment i.e., pumps, footwear, etc. and ensure it is in a condition that meets the general requirements of FIFA, CSA, ASA, and BCSA.
- b) Ensure any season updates are reviewed such as any updated on the following as an example:
 - Size of balls for age groups
 - Number of players for age groups
 - Off-side rule
 - Retreat line requirements (depending on the age group), etc.
- c) Review and update on any Big Country Soccer Association updates pertaining to soccer for the Association.

7.2 Match Official is to submit any dates that they are not able to officiate games to the Registered Members' Referee Coordinator and/ or designated representative. Once the schedule is released by BCSA, the schedule will be compared to the dates that the Match Official is not available to plan on additional coverage on those games where the initial Match Official is not available.

8 Pre-Game Duties

8.1 If a Match Official accepts or declines a game, this must be done within 24-48 hours upon receiving game assignments. Failure to do so may result in reassignments, as the Registered Members' Referee Coordinator and/ or designated representative must ensure games are covered within an acceptable time frame.

8.2 Game assignments are to be distributed fairly to all registered Match Officials for everyone to be able to officiate and develop their skills.

8.3 Declining games under 48-hours' notice is not acceptable due to the time and effort to locate and coordinate a replacement. However, Big Country Soccer Association understands that there may be circumstances out of the control of the Match Official. Therefore, immediate contact should an emergency come up must be sent to the Registered Members' Referee Coordinator and/ or designated representative.

8.4 Match Official is to adhere to the policies "Smoke-Free Sports Policy" (Ref: BCSA-POL-012) and "Alcohol, Drugs, and Illicit Substances Policy" (Ref: BCSA-POL-017).



9 Game Day Guidelines

9.1 Note the following game day guidelines:

- a) Match Officials are to arrive a minimum of 30-minutes prior to the kick-off of the match, when feasible depending on when the game is to start. This is necessary to complete the necessary preparations for the game.
- b) Ensure Match Official attire and equipment needed to officiate the game is appropriate and complete.
- c) Ensure the field is walked over to identify any visible hazards that may require action to avoid risk to the players and the Match Official while the game is being played.
- d) Check the nets to ensure they are secured and that the corner flags are properly positioned and inserted into the ground completely.
- e) Ensure game balls are the correct size and are adequately inflated. In the event that the team does not have appropriate balls, the Match Official may have to seek balls from the opposing team.
- f) Check the players to ensure that their equipment is proper. This includes ensuring shin guards are being worn and no metal studded cleats are being used.
- g) Ensure game sheets are properly presented and recorded by each of the coaches. If corrections are required, the coaches are to complete the game sheets before the game officially starts.
- h) Ensure that the following expectations are covered off with the coaches before the game:
 - How subs will be managed (players must be at center before subs will be granted; if not at centre; subs will not be permitted until subs are at center off pitch).
 - Players not involved with the game (off field) must be wearing pinnies that is a different color from their game jersey colors. When ready to sub on, pinnies are to be off and the players waiting to come on at center.
 - Players are permitted to exit off the field when being subbed. Ideally players coming off can be done at center but Match Official discretion if players coming off can do so at any touch line closest to the player.
 - Handball requirements.



- Ensuring coaches support a stoppage in play if there is any incident involving harassment.
 - If a player is injured, the Match Official is to wave the coach onto the field.
 - Game Captain and coin toss process.
 - What incidents would call for an abandonment of the game i.e., harassment of the Match Officials, lightning, and severe weather, etc.
- i) Ensure that any signals given during the game i.e., free kicks, hand ball, etc. are clear. This will help communicate to the coaches and spectators what call is being made at any point in the game. Ensure when using the whistle and/ or voice that it is clear and strong.
- j) During the game, the Match Official may act in a coaching capacity on the field helping players understand the rules of the game. This is especially the case for younger teams but may not be required for the older teams.
- k) Bring play under control early, players will be testing to see what the Match Official let them get away with early and escalate from there. Be aware of the age group being officiated and skill level of the players. If it is a foul, blow the whistle. Any and all fouls require stoppage in play in support of the FIFA Laws.

9.2 Note the following age group requirements:

Table 4 – Age Group Game Requirements

Age Group	Ball Size	Game Format	Game Time	Retreat Line
U7	3	3v3	30-min	Yes- Half-way Line
U9	3	4v4 (no keeper) 5v5 (with keeper)	40-min	Yes- Half-Way Line
U11	4	7v7	50-min	Yes- One-Third
U13	5	9v9	80-min	No
U15	5	11v11	90-min	No
U17+	5	11v11	90-min	No

Note:

- ii. *There is a 5-minute break between halves. Additionally, there is no stoppage time during the games.*



10 Game Reports

- 10.1** Match Officials are to complete the game reports and submit them within 24-hours.
- 10.2** All game cautions that issued during the game must be summarized on the game sheet. In the event of the seriousness of the incident, the Match Official may need to include a further document to help summarize the details. Once recorded, the incident details are to be submitted to the Registered Members' Referee Coordinator and/ or designated representative for review and possible submission up to the Big Country Soccer Association Board for review, investigation, and action.

11 Match Official Safety

- 11.1** In the event that the Match Official is subjected to harassment while carrying out their duties as the Match Official for a Big Country Soccer Association scheduled game, the Match Official must:
- a) Stop the game and discuss the incident with the coaches. If the harassment continues, the person identified as causing the harassment is to be asked to leave the location of the game.
 - b) If the person carrying out the harassment does not leave the field area, then the Match Official will stop the game and suspend the match.

Note:

- iii. *Big Country Soccer Association does have a "Zero-Tolerance Policy" (Ref: BCSA-FORM-002) and "Harassment Policy" (Ref: BCSA-POL-004). Any incidents involving abuse of the Match Official will be investigated and actions carried out based on the details of the resulting investigation.*
- 11.2** In the Match Official is to include a detailed account of the incident in the game report and subsequent documents in support of the Match Official statement.
- 11.3** The Big Country Soccer Association "Discipline Committee" as noted in "Big Country Soccer Association Discipline Committee Requirements" (Ref: BCSA-GOV-006) will be followed.
- 11.4** Depending on the incident and the investigation, the Match Official may be required to participate in the investigation process through follow-up interviews conducted by Big Country Soccer Association.



12 Player Injury

- 12.1** In the case of a player injury, the game is to be stopped immediately. The Match Official will go to the player to provide first assessment on the condition of the player. If the player requires assistance, the Match Official is to signal to the coach that their player requires assistance.
- 12.2** If the player is struck in the face, head, neck area or the incident involves the face, head, neck area, the player must leave the field of play to assess whether there is a possible concussion as per Big Country Soccer Association “Concussion Policy” (*Ref: BCSA-POL-005*).
- 12.3** When ready to resume play, a drop ball will be done if the play was stopped while the ball was in play. If the ball was already out of bounds, then the restart will be done with a throw-in or kick as per the normal FIFA Laws of the Game.

13 Payment Schedule

- 13.1** Big Country Soccer Association pays Match Officials for Big Country Soccer Association events as per the payment schedule posted on the Big Country Soccer Association website at [Big Country Soccer Association : Match Officials](#)

Note:

- iv. Payment schedules are required to be agreed to by each Registered Member and made available to Match Officials that are representing the community they are officiating games in.*
- v. For home games where the opposing team does not show up calling for a forfeit, the Match Official will be compensated for 50% of the fee for the abandoned game.*
- 13.2** Match Officials are to submit their game sheets into the Registered Members’ Referee Coordinator and/ or designated representative verifying the Match Official completed the officiating of the scheduled game.
- 13.3** In the event that a Match Official does not show up for a game where the Match Official was scheduled to officiate and no notification was sent to Registered Members’ Referee Coordinator and/ or designated representative that the Match Official will not be able to be in attendance to the game, the Referee Coordinator will complete the “Match Official No-Show Report” (*Ref: BCSA-FORM-008*) and place it in the file of the Match Official for follow-up.



14 Weather and Air Quality

- 14.1** Match Official will adhere to Big Country Soccer Association “Lightning, and Severe Weather Policy” (Ref: *BCSA-POL-006*), and “Air Quality Guideline Policy” (REF: *BCSA-POL-024*).

15 Match Official Evaluations

- 15.1** Big Country Soccer Association is committed to the development of Match Officials that are assigned to officiate games. A Match Official Evaluation (REF: *BCSA-FORM-015*) may be provided by the President and/ or Vice-President for Big Country Soccer Association as a development support.
- 15.2** In the event that a concern is reported to Registered Members’ Referee Coordinator and/ or designated representative and/ or the Big Country Soccer Association Board, an evaluation will be conducted on the next available assigned game and provided to the Match Official. A copy of the evaluation will be held on file with the Big Country Soccer Association.