

Team Uniform Guidelines for OVR Referees

Addressing team uniform issues generally leads to nothing but a negative start to a match or tournament. It often results in a player being upset, especially the younger kids, and it can upset coaches and the players' parents as well – it's not good for any of us. As referees, we have more important things to focus on. Our role is not to prevent a player or team from participating, nor is it to upset them. More importantly, our current approach is not consistent with providing a fun, exciting playing experience in a friendly, positive environment.

So, after giving this a lot of thought and consideration, for the remainder of the season we are taking a new approach with team uniform issues. With few exceptions, we will allow teams to play with the uniforms they currently have. Here's what we will now do:

- 1) Report all uniform issues directly to me at the end of the tournament; include the team/club name and date/site of the tournament. Other than a few issues noted below, you should not make team uniforms your focus.
- 2) Do NOT take pictures of teams or players to include in your report. I will request photos from the coach or club director, as needed.
- 3) If a player is wearing shorts/culottes/a skirt while the team is wearing spandex, DO NOT address this at all. This has already been approved by USAV and the OVR. For a variety of reasons, some players may not be comfortable wearing spandex shorts – Be sensitive to this! If the shorts aren't the same color/design as the spandex, allow them to play anyway. (see #1 above)
- 4) For issues with Libero jersey contrast, ask the COACH if they have another jersey option for the Libero. If they do not, allow the team to play with the jerseys they have, keeping in mind there ARE limits. EX: dark gray, maroon, dark green or navy blue do NOT contrast with black. (see #1 above)
- 5) For issues with jersey numbers, i.e., the color of the number does not contrast with the surrounding jersey color(s), the number has an outline that contrasts but the color of the number itself does not, or the number is not centered on the front/back of the jerseys, the teams can obviously not fix that at the tournament. Do not bother the coaches with this issue at all. USAV is also relaxing this for national events for this season. (see #1 above)
- 6) For issues with the shorts/uniform bottoms, including but not limited to the design of the shorts not being the same for all team members, ask the COACH if the issue can be resolved. If not, allow the team to play with the shorts/uniform bottoms they have. (see #1 above)
- 7) When a player is wearing long athletic pants instead of shorts, you must still ask the COACH to present their OVR waiver. If they don't have a waiver, allow them to play and report as noted in #1.
- 8) These procedures DO NOT apply to jewelry rules. Those rules must be enforced as normal. A waiver must be presented by the COACH for "daith" piercings or other medical conditions. All other jewelry must be removed, NOT TAPED/COVERED.

For flagrant uniform issues, you may need to address those at the tournament, like you've always done. For example, a team can't wear a variety of uniforms – they need to be the same or very similar.

We are not relaxing uniform rules – we are relaxing YOUR responsibility when it comes to enforcing them. In general, if you take the approach that your job is to allow teams to play whenever it's reasonable, you should be on the right track with this. Ask if you have questions!