

# Advice to the State Cup Referee on the RQT Substitution Rule

## Rule 302. SUBSTITUTIONS

**Section 1.** Except as provided by USYSA or its State Associations, substitutions shall be unlimited except where specified otherwise in the rules and regulations for a special competition.

**Section 2.** Substitutions may be made, with the consent of the referee, at any stoppage in play.

This is the new substitution rule that will be used in all Regional Qualifying Tournaments (RQT) across American in all four regions. Our State Cup is a RQT, so the rules we all follow during regular season with regards to substitution will NOT be used. All other rules of play will apply. The intent of the rule is to allow teams to substitute players when play is stopped similar to what we see in FIFA sanctioned matches. In this case, however, unlimited subs can occur. The heart of the rule is that subs still can only be made with the consent of the referee. It is critical that we as referees use common sense when these situations arise. This means that either team can sub; the team in possession of ball has no bearing. We do not want to be interrupting play every time we blow a whistle for a foul to have players running on and off the field. This would have a crippling effect on the flow of the game. We also need to be aware of delaying tactics by coaches who want to preserve a lead late in the match. The following are some suggestions to assist you during the State Cup matches:

1. Make sure the players to be subbed are ready at the halfway line. Any players walking to the area who are not prepared to enter should wait for the next opportunity. If you are dealing with a significant delay, say the evaluation of an injured player, then by all means get everyone in including the late arrivers.
2. If you blow a whistle for a foul, allow the team to take a quick kick. If they ask for 10 yards, or for some reason this becomes a ceremonial kick and you could allow subs at that time if you so choose.
3. Certain restarts would be logical situations to allow substitutions to occur: kick off, half-time, after a goal is scored, throw-ins, corner kicks, goal kicks, at stoppage for an injury, penalty kicks. If you are going to allow subs at the taking of a PK, it is advisable to have the substitutions occur **BEFORE** the players line up. That way when you identify who will be taking the PK there will be no confusion. Any player on the field can take a PK. If you ID a player to take the kick and then sub and find that he/she has been replaced then there could be some confusion.
4. In RQTs, you are allowed to add time before the half, before full time (the end of the match) and for overtime periods in the case of a match that requires a winner. If it appears that a coach is constantly sending up one or two players at a time in an effort to disrupt and delay the match, you could certainly add time. We are allowing the center referee, if he so chooses, to add time during all of the state cup matches.
5. If you watch any professional matches, rarely is a sub called onto the pitch during the flow of play with play stopped for fouls or misconducts. So pick your spots and use some common sense. Remember, the rule is in your favor. A sub may not occur without the consent of the referee. Just because the player(s) are ready and play is

stopped does not mean that automatically the substitution has to occur at that particular sub opportunity, if doing so would interrupt the flow of play.

6. During the season if a caution (yellow card) is given, the coach has the opportunity to sub for that player. At State Cups in the past this was not a sub opportunity. With the new rule, this technically is a stoppage of play and if player(s) are ready at the halfway line, it would technically be a sub opportunity. However, if you are dealing with a heated situation or are trying to gain match control and need to talk to a player(s), deal with the situation on the field first, and then deal with the subs. If the coach wants to sub for the carded player the coach may only do so if he has a player ready at the halfway line. Again, try to use some common sense.
7. Make sure you talk amongst your referee team on how you want to handle the sub process. It is still recommended that you do not beckon the substitutes onto the field until the players leaving have physically left the field.

Here are the recommendations from *Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game*

### Section 3.5 **PREVENTING DELAY DURING SUBSTITUTIONS:**

*Referees should prevent unnecessary delays due to the substitution process. One source of delay is a request for a substitution that occurs just as a player starts to put the ball back into play. This often (incorrectly) results in the restart being called back and retaken. Another common source of delay is a substitute player who is not prepared to take the field when the request to substitute is made. In each case, the referee should order play to be restarted despite the request and inform the coach that the substitution could be made at the next opportunity.*

*The referee shall not prevent a team from restarting play if the substitute had not reported to the appropriate official before play stopped.*

*During the pregame discussion, the role of each official in managing the substitution process should be discussed in detail. Every effort should be made to ensure awareness of local substitution rules, to follow procedures that facilitate substitution with the minimum of delay, to avoid overlooking valid substitution requests, and to prevent the substitution process from being abused by teams seeking to gain an unfair advantage.*

### **Section 3.6:**

*Except for situations described in 3.5, referees may not ignore or deny permission for a legal substitution that is properly requested. Although Law 3 requires that the referee be “informed before any proposed substitution be made,” this does not mean that the referee can deny permission for any reason other than to ensure that the substitution conforms to the Law. Even if it seems that the purpose is to waste time, the referee cannot deny the request, but should exercise the power granted in Law 7 to add time through “any other cause.”*

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