**Using Communication Equipment**

**Pre-Game Discussions**

**Must be part of one’s Pre-Game!**  Make sure you allow adequate time for pairing and that all are on the same page on how and when to use the radios. Be sure to…

* Wear the unit during warm ups to ensure your comfortable with it while running.
* Ensure that all units are working properly prior to taking the field. Each crew member confirms via “mic checks” prior to the game.
* Adjust volume to your environment to ensure audio quality.
* ***DO NOT*** give unit to anyone outside of the referee crew ***UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES***, such as trainers, operations staff, etc. Communication between crew members must be treated with the highest level of security.
* Center/Main Referee should give adequate pre-game instructions using his/her communication preferences and frequency of desired communication from the tips below.

 **Wording Suggestions for Radio Use:**

* Speak slowly and clearly.
* Keep statements short and concise. The fewer words, the better one can communicate.
* Create and use standard statements and/or words to use. Some examples:
* “Offside” only when raising flag.
* “We’re good” to communicate play is good.
* “White Foul. White Foul.” to communicate one has observed a foul.
* “No. No. No.” to communicate one has not observed a foul.
* “Last touch red” to communicate throw in/kick direction.
* “Blue Sub Next Time” to communicate upcoming substitution.
* “I have Info” when you need to give center referee pertinent information.
* Avoid using the term “NO’ with “Foul” as “No” make get drowned out by whistle/players voices/crowd noise.
* Avoid different phrases or words for same type of play.
* Be precise! Mention team, color, or number when possible.
* Only provide input when you are 100% sure – “Caution. Blue. #12. Dissent” as opposed to “He needs a yellow”.
* Enhance game control by asking and/or giving confirmation. Examples:
* “Number and reason?” for writing down cards, communicating to others
* “Head Injury?” for concussion protocol
* “Ball still in!” when balls stays in play
* Enhanced delayed offside identification! Examples:
* “Good. Good. Good” if player is onside on a questionable long run.
* “Deflection. Deflection” if defensive player purposely attempted to play ball and made contact.
* “Wait. Wait. Wait.” if two players run after a long ball and one started from an offside position.

**In Game Usage:**

* Keep talking and communicating. Angle of view is everything!  Players can block views.
* Referees should always acknowledge communication
* Avoid speaking at times when the Referees or other crew members are focused on something else.
* Don’t mention unnecessary information. Keep non-game observations to a minimum and only during stoppages of play.
* Referees should let Trail Referees know when they are caught on a counter by saying “Help. Help. Help.” when the referee is asking the Trail to make a decision on potential foul and “I’m here” when the referee is back in a credible position.
* Referees should communicate problems/potential issues behind the play when and where appropriate i.e. corner kicks, counter attacks, long balls.
* Keep eye contact!  Radios enhance game control. One still needs to use standard game control design. Connectivity issues, crowd noise, unsure of what was said? Hand signals, head nods, and maybe flags are still a part of your game but useless if eye contact is not there.
* Radios do not replace basic practices. If there is a decision that requires an in-person conversation, such as a controversial goal, take the time to go over and have the conversation with the crew member(s).
* Remember you are blowing your whistle in your partner’s ear (commentary as well).

Remember to charge and clean your units before game time.  Change ear piece pads and microphone pads if appropriate.