



To: National Referees
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State Directors of Instruction
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Subject: Padded Goal Structures

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An issue has recently arisen regarding whether, under the Laws of the Game, the goalposts and/or the crossbar may be padded. The suggestion has been made that this could be considered a safety issue, that such padding is commercially available, and that it could be applied in such a way that the dimensions of the goal structure remain within the requirements of Law 1.

Despite these understandable concerns and good intentions, U.S. Soccer cannot approve the use of padding on goalposts or crossbars in affiliated matches for the following reasons:

- The Laws of the Game do not include padding of the goalposts and/or the crossbar as part of the equipment used on a field.
- The Laws of the Game already provide for the referee's obligation to not permit a game to be played if, in the opinion of the referee, the goal is dangerous in any way.
- An unpadded goal structure is not inherently dangerous.
- Padding could hide defects or dangerous goal conditions and interfere with the referee's evaluation of the safety of the goal.
- Padding on the goal structure could interfere in unpredictable ways with the play of the ball.

U.S. Soccer takes note of the fact that some matches might be played on fields controlled by public authorities which themselves require the padding of goal structures as a condition for using their facilities.