

# Coastal Bend Youth Soccer Association



## Zero Tolerance Referee Abuse Policy & Coach Code of Conduct

*Adopted October 12, 2021*

# Zero Tolerance Policy on Referee Abuse

## Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to make it clear that verbal abuse or negative criticism of referees is as unacceptable as verbal abuse or negative criticism of players. This policy adopts basic standard sanctions for improper conduct.

This policy is not intended to imply that referees are always “right” and the spectator or coach is always “wrong.” Just as players make mistakes during play, referees will make mistakes in officiating, particularly in the younger divisions where they are learning how to referee. These referees must receive positive support from coaches and spectators to continue to grow as an official.

It is never acceptable to abuse or criticize referees, verbally or otherwise, in any situation. CBYSA and Association Clubs will not tolerate any verbal or other abuse, or criticism of referees by any coach or spectator. There are appropriate avenues for coaches and spectators to share concerns about the quality of officiating. Club/CBYSA Board Member welcomes constructive comments about the referees and requests all comments be directed to the CBYSA Referee Development Coordinator or their club’s Referee Assignor. CBYSA contact information can be found at [www.cbysasoccer.org](http://www.cbysasoccer.org).

## Policy on Referee Abuse

**Youth Referees:** Although abuse towards any referee will not be tolerated, any abuse towards a youth referee will result in more severe disciplinary actions by the CBYSA D&P Committee. A Coach or spectator may only communicate in a positive or neutral manner with a youth referee. The coach is responsible for ensuring all spectators associated with their team understand these guidelines relating to communication with a youth referee. A coach/spectator may not express any disagreement or dissatisfaction with the officiating to the youth referee. A coach/spectator may not, before, during, or after a game, negatively criticize a youth referee of their performance.

Any Club/CBYSA Board Member or USSF-certified Adult Referee (who is not the game official) present at the game shall, if necessary, intervene if any coach, spectator, or other adult is criticizing or abusing a youth referee, verbally or otherwise, and may take immediate appropriate action. This may include directing the offender to leave the site, and/or suspending or terminating the game.

Any concerns about the quality of officiating of a youth referee must be addressed to the Association Club’s Referee Assignor, CBYSA Referee Development Coordinator, or Club/CBYSA board member.

Anyone observing behavior not following these guidelines should immediately report the incident to an Association Club/CBYSA board member or field marshal on duty so that situation can be handled appropriately.

At the discretion of the center referee or Club/CBYSA Board Member, a warning may be given, **but is not required**, for a first time violation of this policy. The center referee or Club/CBYSA Board Member who witnesses any abuse of a referee may remove the offending party from the premises. The Police should be called for anyone who refuses to leave the premises. In the event that this would leave a player unattended by a guardian, the parent may choose to allow the player to stay

and complete the game under supervision of their coach or another parent. If the parent is uncomfortable the player may be excused from the remainder of the game as well, spectators will not be allowed to remain on the premises because they are the only guardian of the player.

### Conduct Review Committee

The CBYSA D&P Committee will review referee abuse cases from association clubs. Results of the review will be provided to all association members and tracked for potential repeat offenses.

### Disciplinary Sanctions for Referee Abuse

The following sanctions will be applied unless modified upon review of the incident by the CBYSA D&P Committee.

Type of Abuse	Recommended Sanction
Criticism, heckling, or verbal abuse of a referee (not including offensive, insulting, or foul-language) <b>First Offense</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 week suspension from all soccer activities (Games &amp; Practices)</li> </ul>
Serious verbal abuse of a referee (e.g. using offensive, insulting, or foul language), or repeated offense of less serious abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimum 2 week suspension from all soccer activities (Games &amp; Practices)</li> <li>● CBYSA Review Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.</li> </ul>
Coming onto the field to confront an adult referee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimum 4 week suspension from all soccer activities (Games &amp; Practices)</li> <li>● CBYSA Review Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.</li> </ul>
Coming onto the field to confront a youth referee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minimum 4 week suspension from all soccer activities (Games &amp; Practices)</li> <li>● CBYSA Review Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.</li> <li>● A letter of apology to the youth referee.</li> <li>● Any specified form of appropriate apology to the players, coaches, and parents of the teams affected by the conduct.</li> </ul>
Threatening any referee (by word or action)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CBYSA Review Committee Hearing</li> <li>● Reported to CBYSA/STYSA</li> </ul>

Egregious offenses (e.g. repeated or multiple abusive situations, physical contact with a referee, or exceptionally inappropriate behavior directed toward a referee) shall result in immediate and continuing suspension of the offending person pending a thorough review. The CBYSA D&P Committee will determine if further or more serious discipline is warranted. An egregious offense

violates the fundamental mission of CBYSA and requires strong action. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, suspension for the season, suspension for multiple seasons, or lifetime coaching bans.

These sanctions apply only to the discipline of spectators and coaches. Sanctions necessary for any player will be dealt with using the Red Card Policy from the Coastal Bend Youth Soccer Association/South Texas Youth Soccer Association Rules.

A plea of ignorance to this policy is not sufficient, and violators may expect appropriate action by the CBYSA D&P Committee.

These sanctions do not limit, prevent, or replace any voluntary or required report or referral of improper conduct, by an adult toward any child, to any law enforcement or child protection agency.

## **CBYSA COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT**

Coaches are responsible for their conduct as well as their parents and spectators during and after a game. Coaches are the teachers, as well as role models for the players, and their actions must be beyond reproach. Therefore, the following rules of conduct have been adopted:

1. Any yellow card administered by a referee to a coach or an assistant coach will result in a written warning being issued by the CBYSA Referee Coordinator to that offending coach or assistant coach. This warning will be in effect for the next two games. This refers to the coaches'/assistant's conduct only. Coaches are required to speak with any spectator causing concern to the referee, but if the spectator continues with behavior causing concern to the referee, the action of that referee should be toward that particular spectator only.

A second yellow card received during the next two league games will result in a two (2) game suspension. CBYSA Referee Coordinator will notify, in writing, to the offending coach. This notification must be made before the suspension is served. The coach may not attend any games or practices during this suspension.

2. Any red card administered by a referee to a coach or assistant coach will result in a four (4) game suspension for that offending coach or assistant coach. This suspension will be for the next four (4) games and carried on into a subsequent season, if necessary. The coach may not attend any games or practices during this suspension.

3. Each coach or assistant coach receiving a red card will be placed on probationary status. If a coach receives a yellow or red card during a probationary status, the penalties will be doubled – four (4) games for a yellow card and eight (8) games for a red card.

4. Any coach or assistant coach who receives a third red card during their tenure with our association will be permanently removed from 'Approved' status. They will no longer be permitted to have any contact with players during all practices or games. The team roster must be revised to remove that coach and their pass must be returned to the Coastal Bend Youth Soccer Association board.

5. Any coach, assistant coach, parent or referee may file a complaint concerning the conduct of an association coach. These written complaints should be filed with the CBYSA President within fourteen (14) days of the game incident. The CBYSA D&P

Committee will then review all complaints. If necessary, the CBYSA President will notify the offending coach within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the filing. The coaches from both teams will respond in writing to the CBYSA D&P Committee, with details concerning the incident. The referee will be required to supply, in writing, their interpretation of the incident. At this point, a determination will be made as to the necessity of a formal hearing or a written warning. If necessary, a hearing of the complaint will then be conducted within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the filing. Any coach or assistant coach receiving any of the above penalties can appeal the decision in writing to the CBYSA D&P Committee (30) days of the hearing. The CBYSA D&P Committee will hold a hearing with the penalized coach, and the CBYSA Referee Coordinator within fourteen (14) days of filing the appeal. The decision of the CBYSA D&P Committee will determine if the appeal is upheld. Any decision can be appealed to the governing STYSA office within thirty (30) days of the decision. The STYSA office will then become the governing body for the incident.

### **Conduct**

Coaches are responsible for the behavior of the players, spectators, and themselves. Each coach is responsible for the conduct of every person, including guests on their side of the field. A coach is recognized by CBYSA as a participant in the match and may receive yellow and red cards from the referee. The referee is not required to warn coaches before issuing either yellow or red cards. No person may move up and down the length of the touchline for the purpose of coaching and instructing players. Except for the referee(s) and players in a game, no other person is allowed on the field unless, and until, authorized by the referee. Spectators, coaches and substitute players are required to remain at least 5 feet back from the touchline on their side of the field to allow the assistant referee a clear view down the field. Fighting by any persons, either in the game or on the sidelines, and/or loud verbal abuse or physical/verbal assault of the referee, shall be grounds to immediately suspend the match if the referee chooses. Such a decision is that of the referee alone. The coach will be held responsible by CBYSA. CBYSA has the right to begin disciplinary hearings in the event CBYSA and/or club officers witness such actions, even when the referee does not choose to take action.

### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse is defined by CBYSA as unwelcome touching, striking or the threat to do so, both verbal and nonverbal; CBYSA will not tolerate this conduct. Any physical abuse of a referee by any coach, player or spectator, or by any person present at the match against any other person at the CBYSA sponsored event, whether occurring preceding,

during or following a game, will result in an immediate ban of the offending person from future CBYSA events and the incident will be referred to the STYSA office along with the local authorities for consideration of further disciplinary action. Any person approaching the referee proceeding, during or following a game will be considered as threatening physical abuse and subject to above penalties. Any spectator who enters the coaches side of the pitch during a game will be considered as threatening physical abuse and subject to above penalties.

### **Verbal Abuse**

Verbal Abuse is defined by CBYSA as a verbal attack of a sustained, excessive, obscene or offensive nature. It is not intended to include mere dialogue or questions by or among coaches and/or referees.

### **Spectators**

Upon any initial incident of verbal abuse directed toward a referee, any player, any coach or any other spectator, the referee will stop the match (if ongoing) to warn the coach and allow the coach to advise their spectator(s) of the warning and counsel the spectator(s) to cease immediately. If such an incident occurs before the match, the referees will similarly warn the coach and instruct the coach to warn their spectator(s). If such an incident occurs following a match, the referee will notify the Club Board member/field marshal and the incident will be considered an initial incident for the purposes of the offending team's next games. A repeat offense occurring during the same match will be cause for stoppage of the match, at the sole discretion of the referee, and thereupon the coach associated with the offending spectator(s) must immediately provide the name(s) of the abusive spectator(s) to the referee and assist in the removal of the spectator(s). If the coach refuses to do so, he will be suspended immediately from all CBYSA matches until the offending person(s) is identified in writing to the President of CBYSA. If the spectator refuses to leave the match, it will be terminated and the spectator is suspended from all future matches for the season. A second incident of abuse occurring at a future match by the same offender during the same season will result in a suspension of the offender for the remainder of the season, or for the entire next season if the incident occurs during the last match of the season. Club Board members/field marshals who witness abuse have the same rights to issue warnings and suspensions to abusive spectators and coaches regardless of actions not taken by the referee.

### **Yellow and red card policy and other disciplinary matters**

In CBYSA, both players and coaches can receive red and yellow cards. Two yellow cards in a match equal a red card and an ejection from the match. Ejected players and

coaches must leave the field area immediately. The referee has the authority to issue both red and yellow cards from the time they arrive at the field to the time they leave. The referee never has to warn a player or a coach before issuing either a yellow or red card. Generally cards will be shown, but it is not necessary for the referee to show the card in order for disciplinary action to be taken. The CBYSA D&P Committee will monitor yellow card reports. Disciplinary action may be taken, with or without warning, against habitual and repeat offenders. Such action may include phone calls from the CBYSA D&P Committee to the participant, coach or spectator, letters of warning or reprimand, and/or summons to a disciplinary hearing. However, it is never necessary for any of these actions, or any other form of warning, to occur before stronger disciplinary action can be initiated when deemed necessary by the CBYSA D&P Committee or the CBYSA Board. The CBYSA D&P Committee will handle red cards. The coach of the team to which the coach or player is registered will be notified of the committee decision in about two (2) weeks or less after the red card report has been received by the CBYSA President. This policy means the player or coach will serve a minimum suspension of however many games occur within this time frame. Note that every disciplinary action for various red card infractions stated in the CBYSA and/or STYSA Constitution, Bylaws, and elsewhere, is always stated as minimum. You may be suspended for many more games than the stated minimum, and the Disciplinary Committee has the power and authority to suspend any participant, including spectators, for up to 99 years. Every red card will be evaluated on an individual basis and there is no appeal to precedent. The CBYSA Board in conjunction with the assigned referee will be responsible for the enforcement of suspensions.