

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.

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) First Offense	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1 week suspension from all soccer activities (Games & Practices)
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">Minimum 2 week suspension from all soccer activities (Games & Practices)CBYSA D&P Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.
Coming onto the field to confront an adult referee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 2 week suspension from all soccer activities (Games & Practices)CBYSA D&P Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.
Coming onto the field to confront a youth referee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 4 week suspension from all soccer activities (Games & Practices)CBYSA D&P Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.A letter of apology to the youth referee.Any specified form of appropriate apology to the players, coaches, and parents of the teams affected by the conduct.
Threatening any referee (by word or action)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CBYSA D&P Committee HearingReported to STYSA

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.