

AYSO Region 1422 Zero Tolerance Referee Abuse Policy

Approved September 8, 2004

Purpose of the Policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to make clear that verbal abuse or negative criticism of referees is as unacceptable as verbal abuse or negative criticism of players and to adopt basic standard sanctions for improper conduct.
2. This policy is not intended to imply that referees are always "right" and the spectator or coach is always "wrong". Just as players will make mistakes during play, referees will make mistakes in officiating, particularly in the younger divisions where they are learning how to referee. In addition, sometimes referees are "in over their head" because of a particularly challenging game, an assignment beyond their experience or comfort level, etc.

Policy on Referee Abuse

1. It is never acceptable to abuse or criticize referees, verbally or otherwise, in any situation. **Region 1422 will not tolerate any verbal or other abuse, or criticism of a referee by any coach or spectator.**
2. **Youth Referees: A Coach or spectator may only communicate in a positive way with a youth referee.** The coach is responsible for ensuring all spectators associated with his/her team follow 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, discuss with a youth referee their critique of the referee's performance, other than to thank and compliment the referee.
 - a. Any Board Member or AYSO-certified adult referee 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.
 - b. There are appropriate avenues for coaches or spectators to share concerns about the quality of officiating. The region Referee Staff welcomes constructive comments about referees. However, any criticism or critique of a youth referee's performance may only be communicated to the youth by a designated Referee Mentor or the Regional Referee Administrator.
3. Any AYSO-certified volunteer (any coaches, Board Member, other referees, Division Commissioner, etc.) observing behavior not following these guidelines shall report the incident to the Regional Referee Administrator or other Board member within 24 hours of the incident so that appropriate review can take place.

Disciplinary Sanctions for Referee Abuse

1. Any Board member, upon receipt of any reported abuse of a referee shall report the incident to the Disciplinary Committee, which shall consist of the Regional Commissioner, the Regional Coach Administrator and the Regional Referee Administrator, who shall implement appropriate discipline, before the next game if possible.

The following sanctions will be applied unless modified upon review of the incident:

<u>Type of Abuse</u>	<u>Recommended Sanction</u>
i) Criticism or verbal abuse of a referee (not including offensive, insulting, or foul language)-first offense	1 game suspension
ii) Serious verbal abuse of a referee (e.g. using offensive, insulting, or foul language), or repeated offence of less serious abuse	2 game suspension - Possible additional sanctions and/or remedial actions
iii) Coming onto the field to confront an adult referee, or threatening the adult referee (by word or action)	2 game suspension - Disciplinary Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.
iv) Coming onto the field to confront the youth referee, or threatening the youth referee (by word or action)	4 game suspension - Disciplinary Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions and, if required, by 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.

2. Immediate and sincere remorse on the part of the offender may be taken into account when determining whether a lesser level of sanction should be applied.

3. Egregious offenses (e.g. repeated or multiple abusive situation, physical contact with a referee, or exceptionally inappropriate misbehavior directed toward a referee) shall result in immediate and continuing suspension of the offending person pending a thorough review. The Disciplinary Committee will determine if further or more serious discipline is warranted. An egregious offense violates the fundamental mission of AYSO and requires strong action. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, suspension for the season, suspension for multiple seasons, taking referee training, refereeing a set number of games, or other remedial education and training, or expulsion of the person from further participation in AYSO.

4. A suspended person may not, during their suspension, attend any Region 1422 soccer game. The suspended person may attend practices unless notified of additional restrictions by the Disciplinary Committee.

5. The Regional Board of Directors shall be notified of all suspensions at its next regular meeting and shall, subject to any further action of the Disciplinary Committee and any right of appeal, enforce the disciplinary action.

6. These sanctions apply only to the discipline of spectators and coaches. Sanctions necessary for any players on one of the teams involved that exhibit inappropriate behavior will be dealt with using the Cautions or Ejection procedures for that particular age group.

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