

## Youth Referee Program Zero Tolerance Policy

Youth development is the central focus of the AYSO program. This includes development of youth whether they are soccer players or soccer referees. All the AYSO guidelines and policies on providing a "Safe, Fair and Fun" environment for players also apply to youth referees. Only "Positive, Instructive, and Encouraging" comments can be directed at youth players or youth referees.

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

This policy is not intended to imply that youth referees are always "right", and the adult spectator or coach is always "wrong." Just as youth players will make mistakes during play, youth referees will make mistakes in officiating, particularly in the younger divisions where they are learning how to referee. In addition, sometimes youth referees are "in over their head" because of a particularly challenging game, an assignment beyond their experience or comfort level, etc.

This policy is not meant to imply that criticism/abuse of adult referees is permitted. However, in this case the adult referee is expected to handle such behavior at the field and report such incidents to the Regional Referee Administrator or other Board Member for appropriate action.

### Policy on Youth Referee Abuse

- It is never acceptable to abuse or criticize youth referees, verbally or otherwise, in any situation. Region 75 will not tolerate any verbal or other abuse, or criticism of a youth referee by any coach or spectator.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

### Disciplinary Sanctions for Youth Referee Abuse

Any Board member, upon receipt of any reported abuse of a youth referee shall report the incident to the Disciplinary Committee, which shall consist of the appropriate Divisional Commissioner, the Boys' or Girls' Director, as appropriate, the Regional Commissioner, and the

Regional Referee Administrator, who shall implement appropriate discipline, before the next game if possible.

At a minimum, sanctions include the suspension of one game. They will be increased in the event of serious verbal abuse, confronting the youth referee and/or threatening the youth referee.