

PASO Zero Tolerance Policy On Misconduct Towards A Referee

Purpose of this Policy

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. 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. The structure of PASO’s referee program is much like our player program geared toward development. Referees must receive positive support from coaches and spectators to continue to grow as an official.

Misconduct towards a referee means persistent statements or physical acts directed toward a referee during or after a game, that do not constitute referee assault or abuse as provided under Federation Policy 531-9, but that mistreat the referee or are inappropriate or unacceptable statements or acts, and may include the following:

- i. Excessive incidences of foul or abusive language at the referee;
- ii. Statements that diminish the authority of the referee;
- iii. Statements or acts that serve to intimidate without threatening physical harm to the referee.

It is never acceptable to abuse or criticize referees, verbally or otherwise, in any situation. The Prosper Area Youth Soccer Organization (PASO) will not tolerate any verbal or other abuse, or criticism of a referee by any coach or spectator. There are appropriate avenues for coaches and spectators to share concerns about the quality of officiating. The PASO Board of Directors welcomes constructive comments about the referees. The PASO Board of Directors contact information can be found on the Board of Directors Page at prospersoccer.org.

Policy On Misconduct Towards A Referee

Although abuse towards any referee will not be tolerated, any abuse towards a youth referee will result in more severe disciplinary actions by the PASO A&D (Appeals & Disciplinary) Committee. A Coach or spectator may only communicate in a positive way with a referee. The coach is responsible for ensuring all spectators associated with his/her team follow these guidelines relating to communication with a referee. A coach/spectator may not express any disagreement or dissatisfaction with the officiating to the referee. A coach/spectator may not, before, during, or after a game, discuss with a referee their critique of the referee’s performance, other than to thank and compliment the referee.

Any PASO Board Member or USSF-Certified PASO Referee present at the game shall, if necessary, intervene if any coach, spectator, or other adult is criticizing or abusing a 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 referee must be addressed to the Referee Assignor, Head Referee, or PASO board members.

Anyone observing behavior not following these guidelines should immediately report the incident to the PASO Board Member’s on duty so that situation can be handled appropriately. Please report to a **RED Shirted** referee and one of the Board Member’s on Duty or Head referee will be contacted.

At the discretion of the Center Referee, Head Referee, Referee Mentor, or PASO Board Member(s), a warning may be given, **but is not required**, for a first time violation of this policy. The Center Referee, Head Referee, Referee Mentor, or PASO Board Member(s) who witnesses any abuse of a referee may direct the offender(s) to leave the premises. The Police should be called for anyone who refuses to leave the premises.

Disciplinary Sanctions For Misconduct Towards A Referee

Any Board Member, upon receipt of any reported abuse of a referee shall report the incident to the PASO A&D Committee Chair, who shall implement appropriate discipline before the next game if possible.

The following sanctions will be applied unless modified upon review of the incident by the PASO A&D Committee Chair. All Conduct deemed referee Assault or Abuse will be turned over to NTSSA A&D Chair

Type of Misconduct	Recommended Sanction
Criticism, heckling, or verbal abuse of a referee (not including offensive, insulting, or foul-language) First Offense	<p>Minimum 1 game suspension</p> <p>Possible game suspension for the family member(s) playing in PASO</p>
Serious verbal abuse of a referee (e.g. using offensive, insulting, or foul language), or Repeated Offense of less serious abuse.	<p>Minimum 3 game suspension</p> <p>Minimum 1 game suspension for the family member(s) playing in PASO</p> <p>PASO A&D Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.</p>
Coming onto the field to confront a referee.	<p>Immediate and continuing suspension of the offending person and the family member(s) playing in PASO pending a thorough review.</p> <p>A report of the alleged assault/abuse will be submitted immediately to the NTSSA A&D Committee Chairman by PASO's A&D Chairman.</p> <p>A letter of apology to the referee.</p> <p>Any specified form of appropriate apology to the players, coaches, and parents of the teams affected by the conduct.</p>
Threatening any referee (by word or action)	<p>Immediate and continuing suspension of the offending person and the family member(s) playing in PASO pending a thorough review.</p> <p>A report of the alleged assault/abuse will be submitted immediately to the NTSSA A&D Committee Chairman by PASO's A&D Chairman.</p>

Any acts directed toward a referee which constitute referee assault or abuse under Federation Policy 531-9, Shall result in immediate and continuing suspension of the offending person pending a thorough review which could include a hearing by NTSSA and USSF. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, suspension for the season, suspension for multiple seasons, or lifetime coaching bans. Any suspension assessed against an individual under this section is in addition to and does not affect any other suspension and/or fine that may be imposed on the individual by NTSSA. 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 NTSSA Rules.

A plea of ignorance to this policy is not sufficient, and violators may expect appropriate action by the PASO Board of Directors.

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.

Adopted 4/21/17

PASO BOD