

**EDINA SOCCER CLUB**  
**Zero Tolerance Policy on Referee Abuse**

This policy has been developed to address the growing (and unfortunate) trend of referee abuse in youth sports, in general, and youth soccer, in particular. Our policy, as set forth below, is simple: Any physical or verbal abuse of referees is as unacceptable as physical or verbal abuse of players. It is never acceptable for spectators to criticize referees, verbally or otherwise, at an ESC event.

**Our Policy**

Spectators shall not address any member of the referee crew in a negative manner – physically, verbally or with gestures – during or after a game. Spectators also shall not make any comments in an effort to “help” a referee make a call or suggest that a certain call should or should not be made. While complimentary comments to referees are certainly fine, a good rule of thumb for spectators is simply not to engage with the referees in any way during or after a game. Just keep quiet and let the referees do their job to the best of their ability.

This policy is not intended to suggest that referees are always correct. Clearly, referees will make mistakes. This is particularly true with respect to our youth referees who are learning how to officiate games and are sometimes asked to referee games at a higher level than they may be comfortable officiating. When mistakes are made, there are procedures for ESC coaches to report concerns about the quality of the officiating. But it is never acceptable for a spectator to abuse or criticize a game official, verbally or otherwise, in any situation.

A plea of ignorance to this policy shall not excuse behavior that violates this policy. It should be obvious to all those involved with youth sports that referee abuse of any type is not acceptable.

**Reporting Violations of this Policy**

Anyone may report violations of this policy by sending an e-mail to [traveling@edinasoccerclub.com](mailto:traveling@edinasoccerclub.com). If a report contains sufficient information, the ESC will look into the situation and, if appropriate, impose disciplinary sanctions on any persons who are found to have violated this policy. The ESC will not reveal the identity of any person reporting a violation of this policy in the course of investigating a report.

**Disciplinary Sanctions for Referee Abuse**

The ESC Board of Directors may, in its discretion, impose disciplinary sanctions on any spectator it finds to have violated this policy.

Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, warnings, game suspensions and, in egregious cases, suspension for the remainder of the season, suspension for multiple seasons, and a permanent ban from ESC activities. Egregious cases include repeated or multiple incidents of abuse, physical contact with a referee and exceptionally inappropriate behavior directed toward a referee.

Although abuse of any referee will not be tolerated, abuse of a youth referee will be treated as a more serious violation of this policy.

**Applicability of the Policy**

This policy applies to spectators. Player conduct shall be addressed by the player’s coach and MYSA rules regarding player discipline. ESC families are expected to make spectators accompanying them to ESC games aware of this policy.