

Across the country and throughout sports, there have been increasing numbers of incidents involving coaches, players, and fans/spectators abusing, denigrating, and intimidating game officials. With soccer referee numbers dwindling, and decreasing retention of, in too many cases, our youth referees, we have adopted a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY.



WDDOA – Zero Tolerance Policy

WDDOA endorses good sportsmanship and fair play. Furthermore, we strive to promote a healthy, learning, and competitive environment for our players, referees, fans and spectators.

ALL coaches/players/parents are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players, and fans/spectators in all matches. Abusive, confrontational, and racially charged/bigoted or obscene language, violent play/conduct, fighting, inciting, escalating and other behavior detrimental to individuals (including belittling, derisive comments, and obscene gestures) as well as disruptive to the game will not be tolerated. A coach's/player's/parent's responsibility for referee support and spectator control includes the times prior to, during and after the game at the field and surrounding areas, including parking lots.

This is especially crucial in the presence of a referee under 18 years of age (Youth Referee). Our Youth Referees are an integral part of the soccer community as a whole. Refereeing helps young people develop valuable life skills including leadership, learning to work well under pressure and multi-task, while also filling an essential role within our leagues.

Failure to support the referee undermines the referee's authority and has the potential to create a hostile environment for the players, the referee, and all other participants.

Therefore:

NO ONE is to address the referee or make comments on or about a referee's call or non-call while present at any WDDOA sanctioned event.

The jurisdiction of the referee extends to activities before, during, and after the game. The referee's authority begins upon arrival at the area of the field of play and continues until they have left the playing venue.

Acceptable interactions for Coaching Staff or Player with Referees during Match:

- 1) Responding to a referee who has initiated communication
- 2) Making Substitutions
- 3) Pointing out player injury or safety issue out of sight of the referee crew

If a coach approaches a referee or steps on to the field to challenge a call, they are subject to receiving a yellow or red card as outlined by the Laws of the Game.

After the game and only in a polite and constructive manner, the coaching staff or players may:

- 1) Ask the referee to explain a Law or foul but not judgment calls made in a game
- 2) Interact in a polite and friendly manner. If the polite tone of the conversation changes, the referee may abandon the exchange at any time.

Violations of this Zero Tolerance Policy will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Progression of penalties for violations of this Zero Tolerance Policy by fans and spectators is listed in the WDDOA Sideline Conduct Policy which aims to address and remediate objectionable behavior toward our referees, on and off the field.