



## **NMYSA Zero Tolerance Policy for Inappropriate Behavior Towards Referees**

We have a severe shortage of referees, due in large part to the abuse they are subjected to by coaches, players, and sidelines. The behavior towards referees has to change. Effective immediately, NMYSA will enact a ZERO TOLERANCE policy in regard to any inappropriate behavior towards referees.

### **Policy**

1. Spectators shall not address any member of the referee crew in a negative manner – physically, verbally, or with gestures before, during or after a game.
2. Spectators shall not make any comments to any referee to make a call, or to comment on a call made or not made.
3. Complimenting a referee briefly after a game may be acceptable and probably appreciated. However, sitting back and watching the game unfold while letting the referees do their job to the best of their ability is the best approach.
4. Referees make mistakes like everyone else – and that's okay. Many of our youth referees are learning their craft and the transferable life skills of how to make educated decisions in split seconds. There are procedures for coaches and officials to report concerns regarding the quality of the officiating. Spectators are to leave this process to the coaches and officials to handle. Regardless of the quality of the officiating, it is NEVER acceptable for a spectator to abuse or criticize a referee.
5. Ignorance of this policy is not excusable.

### **Sanctions for Inappropriate Behavior Towards Referees**

1. If an individual is required to leave a game by the center referee or other official, that individual may not be a spectator at the following game (two games for a youth referee).
2. If more than one individual is engaged in a negative manner – physically, verbally or with gestures, all spectators may be disqualified for the following game (two games if directed towards a youth referee).
3. If a second occurrence of a spectator or coach engaging in a negative manner towards a referee (#1 or #2), a strict no spectator for the rest of the season may be enforced. That team will not be allowed to have any spectators on the sideline for the remainder of the fall or spring season.



## Enforcement

1. Local leagues and clubs will enforce this policy.
2. Coaches will be responsible to not allow an individual spectator of his or her team to be a spectator as required.
3. The center referee will be informed of sideline suspensions before games begin.
4. Referees, game officials, field marshals, league officials or tournament officials may report infractions of inappropriate behavior towards referees as defined by this policy subject to local league policies and procedures.

## Referee Assault/Abuse

Referee assault, or abuse is defined by the United States Soccer Federation, (USSF), and is different from “inappropriate behavior” towards a referee as described in this Zero Tolerance policy. Referee Assault and Abuse must be reported to New Mexico Youth Soccer within 48 hours of occurrence and is subject to a hearing and sanctions defined by the United States Soccer Federation, (USSF) for both minor and adult referees.

### Referee Assault

- Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.
- For purposes of this policy, “intentional act” shall mean an act intended to bring about a result which will invade the interest of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.
- Assault includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing, or bodily running into a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee’s uniform or personal property, i.e., car, equipment, etc.

### Referee Abuse

- Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee’s property or equipment.
- Abuse includes but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language towards a referee that implies or threatens physical harm; spewing any beverage on a referee’s personal property; or spitting at (but not on) the referee.