

Inland Empire Soccer Referee Association
Zero Tolerance Policy
As of October 7, 2014

It is important to remember that when a youth referee is officiating a soccer match, he or she is an integral part of the referee pool in our area. These youth referees represent the future resources of the IESRA. Every coach, parent, player and spectator must keep in mind that the young referees working their matches are kids. They are learning to officiate just as young players are learning to play. Abuse or dissent of youth officials will not be tolerated, under ANY circumstance.

The Inland Empire Soccer Referee Association (IESRA) Board and Instructors are well aware that referees will make mistakes. New referees will perform even better if we can make their job less stressful by controlling actions on both sides of the touchline.

Sadly, the actions of out-of-control spectators, parents and coaches require that the IESRA adopt a policy to help prevent physical assault, verbal abuse and dissent against referees within the soccer community. This policy applies to all coaches, players, parents, spectators and other supporters and referees effective immediately.

What is referee assault? "An intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee."

Assault includes but is not limited to:

- Hitting, Punching, or Choking
- Spitting on
- Grabbing
- Bodily running into
- Kicking or throwing at
- Damaging uniform
- Damaging personal property
- Any unwelcome physical contact

What is referee abuse? "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:

- Foul Language
- Abusive Language
- Spewing any beverage
- Spitting at (but not on)
- Verbal Threats

What is dissent? Disagreeing by word or actions. Dissent includes but is not limited to:

- Voicing disagreement with a decision
- Body language expressing disagreement with a decision

Responsibility for the actions of the coaches, players and spectators is the responsibility of the soccer associations and their member clubs. Soccer associations and their members clubs are expected to share this policy with its members including board members, directors, coaches, assistant coaches, bench personnel, parents/guardians and players immediately. Soccer associations, which include coaches, are responsible for informing visiting teams of this policy. Soccer associations are responsible for presenting this policy to ALL teams at the beginning of each playing season, or tournament, with the expressed intent to create a positive culture of respect. IESRA recommends a signed code of conduct be procured from all adults (coaches and parents) associated with each team as is common in other professionally administered youth sports. These signed copies should be kept by the soccer association administration and used to remind those falling short of how they agreed to behave when they registered their child.

When inappropriate behavior occurs, IESRA officials will submit misconduct reports via the referee website. These misconduct reports will be automatically forwarded to the league's disciplinary chair for review. The league's disciplinary chair will make decisions based on these misconduct reports. The decisions of the league's disciplinary chair will be shared with the coaches and managers. We encourage soccer associations to take the findings back to their own disciplinary committee/board members for possible further action.

IESRA may decide to NOT assign officials to a particular team's future games if the safety of the officials is of any concern. Additionally, the IESRA *may* fine the soccer association or its member club \$250 for each incident of coach/player/parent/spectator abuse to the team's league association. A portion of that fine may be used to pay for an adult referee mentor to attend future matches involving the team with reported disciplinary issues.

Feedback to IESRA Board and Instructors:

If coaches or spectators wish to give feedback regarding a referee, they may complete a referee evaluation available on the assigning website, www.spokaneref.org. Referee evaluations are taken very seriously and are reviewed by a referee committee. Issues and behaviors deemed important by the IESRA Board and patterns detected from multiple evaluations will be addressed with the individual referee and future referee training meetings tailored to review specific Laws of the Game that are of concern.

Everyone should become familiar with the Laws of the Game. This will help educate and improve everyone's soccer knowledge and make the game more enjoyable for all.

IESRA Referee's responsibilities include:

- Shall treat the players and coaches courteously and demand the same from them.
- Shall know the Laws of the Game and the league specific rules that are in place.
- Shall place safety of the players above all other considerations.
- Shall conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Actions such as "baiting" or inciting players or coaches are strictly prohibited.
- Shall abandon the game if the coach, assistant coach or bench personnel does not leave the field or the immediate surroundings after having been instructed to do so.

Shall abandon the game if a parent/spectators does not leave the field or the immediate surroundings after having been instructed to do so.
Shall abandon a game if the referee feels his or her safety is being threatened.
Shall call 911 if the official is physically assaulted or fears they will be assaulted, is prevented from leaving the field/parking lot, is verbally assaulted, or any other instances where they feel uncomfortable or fear for their safety.

In all cases of alleged abuse or assault, the referee:
Shall immediately (when safe) contact their match assignor by phone call. If the match assignor is not available, contact an IESRA board member.
Shall write up and submit a misconduct report via the referee website within 24 hours.
Shall write up and submit a supplemental report via the referee website describing any other issues not covered in the misconduct report within 24 hours.
The Referee Chapter President or board member will forward assault or abuse report(s) to the State Referee Administrator and the Soccer Association's President.

Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Bench Personnel:

This policy applies before, during and after the game at the soccer field and its immediate surrounding areas (including the parking lot).
Shall not dissent any call made by the referee(s) at any time.
Shall not make negative Personal, Provocative, or Public comments towards the official.
Shall not make negative demonstrative actions or gestures towards the official.
Shall not address the referee(s) during the game, except to:
 a. Respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation
 b. Point out an emergency or safety concern
 c. Make substitutions by informing the nearest AR
Shall control the behavior of the parents and spectators.
Shall have basic knowledge of the Laws of the Game including proper restarts and direction of restarts (refraining from asking the official for explanations of the calls).
Shall allow the referee crew to meet and hydrate during halftime. Only the team captain may respectfully address the referee at halftime for a quick clarification on the application of the Laws of the Game.

Penalties:

The referee may issue a verbal warning to the offending coach, assistant coach or bench personnel.
The referee may eject the offending coach, assistant coach or bench personnel with or without a previous warning. Once ejected, the individual will be required to leave the field and its immediate surroundings.
NOTE: Officials are instructed to display cards to coaches, assistant coaches and bench personnel.

Players and Substitutes:

Shall be allowed to respectfully speak to the referee during or after the game regarding Laws of the Game applications.

The conduct of the players is governed by the Laws of the Game as stated by FIFA and USSF. The Laws themselves describe penalties associated with violating the Laws of the Game.

Additional penalties for players who engage in misconduct may be established by the club and/or league.

Parents & Spectators:

This policy applies before, during and after the game at the soccer field and its immediate surroundings areas (including the parking lot).

It is strongly suggested that parents and spectators stand on the opposite side of the field from their team bench and not stand behind the goal lines.

Shall not make negative Personal, Provocative, or Public comments towards the official.

Shall not address the referee or assistant referees at any time.

Shall not dispute calls during or after the game.

Shall not make remarks to the officials or advise the official to watch certain players.

Shall not make negative demonstrative actions or gestures towards the official.

Shall not visually display any sign of dissatisfaction with an official's decision with the intent of inciting the officials, players or spectators.

Shall NEVER yell at the referee (s), including criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation or feedback of any kind before, during or after the game.

Allowable exceptions:

May point out an emergency or safety issue, such as a player seriously injured on the field, observed fighting, or lightning.

Penalties:

Referee may issue a verbal warning to the coach of the offending team.

Referee may instruct the coach to direct the parent/spectator to leave the field and its immediate surroundings with or without a previous warning.

Referee may abandon the game if the parent/spectator does not leave the area.

Referee may abandon the game at ANY time the referee feels his/her safety is compromised by parents or spectators.

IESRA will continue to monitor the situation/policy and reserves the right to add/amend/replace any or all of the Policy as IESRA sees fit in order to protect its Referees.

Questions regarding this policy can be sent to office@spokaneref.org.