



Region13 – Zero Tolerance – Referee Abuse

Like so many Regions, Region 13 has a zero tolerance policy on Referee abuse.

Encouraging people to become Referees is always a hurdle. In our largest Division, U10, we have the largest number of new players, new parents, new coaches, new spectators, and new Referees. It's the perfect storm for problems to arise.

We do our best to support new Referees being as visible as possible discouraging disparaging comments towards Referees. Yet there enough abuse that Referee retention is a challenge.

Referees perform a difficult task. They must make quick decisions based on the Laws of the Game, often under close scrutiny from heated sidelines. Often, when a referee blows his whistle, half the people in attendance will agree with his decision and the other half will disagree.

The Laws of the Game (AYSO Edition) require coaches to prohibit negative comments and complaints about officiating. The Laws also require that coach participation is limited to comments and that those comments must be positive, instructional, or encouraging. Coaches are not entitled to question the referee's calls or ask for explanations. Coaches are not permitted on the field unless specifically requested by the referee to tend to an injured player.

Referees are responsible for dealing with misconduct committed by players. They also have the responsibility to deal with irresponsible behavior on the part of coaches and, for that matter, anyone on the sidelines.

When the referees are allowed to focus on refereeing the game to the best of their ability without interference from the sidelines, and the coaches focus on doing nothing more than making positive, instructional, or encouraging comments to their players, and the spectators focus on cheering and acknowledging good plays by both teams, then we create the optimal environment for our children.