

# **AYSO Region 275**

## **“Zero Tolerance” Policy on Youth Referee Abuse**

### **Purpose of the Policy**

- Youth development is the central focus of the AYSO program. This includes development of youth whether they are soccer players, soccer referees, or club lines (uncertified assistant referees). All the AYSO guidelines and policies on providing a "Safe, Fair, and Fun" environment for players also apply to youth referees. Only "Positive, Instructive, and Encouraging" comments are allowed to be directed at youth players or youth referees. The purpose of this policy is to make clear that verbal abuse of youth referees is as unacceptable as verbal abuse of youth players and to adopt basic standard sanctions for improper conduct.
- This policy is not intended to imply that youth referees are always "right" and the adult spectator or coach is always "wrong." Just as youth players will make mistakes during play, youth referees will make mistakes in officiating, particularly in the younger divisions where they are learning how to referee. In addition, sometimes youth referees are "in over their head" because of a particularly challenging game, an assignment beyond their experience or comfort level, etc.

### **Policy on Youth Referee Abuse**

- 1. It is never acceptable to abuse youth referees verbally or otherwise, in any situation. Region 275 will not tolerate any verbal or other abuse or criticism of a youth referee by any coach or spectator. Abuse includes any verbal or other conduct that is defined or characterized as abusive conduct under the AYSO National or Region 275 Child Protection Guidelines.**
2. Should such abuse occur, the incident will be reported immediately to the Regional Referee Administrator who will implement the “Region 275 Disciplinary Sanctions for Referee Abuse.”
3. Any Board Member or AYSO certified adult referee shall, if necessary, intervene if any coach, spectator, or other adult is abusing a youth referee, verbally or otherwise, and may take immediate appropriate action to include directing the offender to leave the site, and/or to suspend or terminate the game. Handling general dissent is part of a referee's job. If the offensive conduct constitutes dissent rather than abuse and the youth referee appears to be managing the dissent appropriately, no intervention is necessary.
4. AYSO adult volunteers (any coaches, Board Member, other referees, Division Coordinator, etc.) shall report any incident of youth referee abuse to the Regional Referee Administrator within 24 hours of the incident.
- 5. There are appropriate avenues for coaches or spectators to share concerns about the quality of officiating.** The Region 275 Referee Staff welcomes constructive comments about youth referees. However, any criticism or critique of a youth referee's performance may only be communicated to the youth by a designated Referee Mentor, the PRO Referee Coordinator, or the Regional Referee Administrator.