

MYSL Rule 21 - Coach and Fan Conduct (Zero Tolerance Policy regarding Misconduct towards Referees)

a) It is the responsibility of ALL coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players and spectators (supporters) in all matches. Abusive and obscene language, violent play, violent conduct, fighting, harassment, intimidation and other behavior detrimental to the game will not be tolerated. A coach's responsibility for referee support and spectator control includes the times prior to, during and after the game at the field and surrounding areas. Failure to do so will undermine the referee's authority and has the potential of creating a hostile environment for players, the referee and all other participants and spectators.

b) The MYSL Zero Tolerance Policy regarding Misconduct towards Referees requires that persons responsible for a team and spectators **will not address the referee at all during the play of the game.**

- Exceptions for persons responsible for a team (Coaches and Assistant Coaches)

During the game:

- Responding to a referee initiating communication
- Making Substitutions
- Pointing out emergencies or safety issues

At half-time or at the end of the match:

- A coach/manager can ask a referee to explain a rule(s) in a polite and constructive manner.
- Polite and friendly feedback can be given to a referee.
- Absolutely NO sarcasm, harassment, or intimidation.

- Penalties for coaches:

Referees may use their best judgement on how to discipline a coach who is violating this policy in the course of a league match. This includes following the "Ask, Tell, Dismiss" protocol as defined in USSF policy, abiding with IFAB Law 5 of the Game, and issuing the appropriate cards (ie, Yellow, and/or Red). It is hoped that these actions will be documented and provided to the appropriate MYSL authorities.

- Exceptions for Spectators:

During the game:

- Responding to a referee initiating communication.
- Pointing out emergencies or safety issues.

- Penalties for Spectators:

Referees may use their best judgement on how to discipline a spectator who is violating this policy in the course of a league match. This may include the following:

1st Infraction:

Referee shall stop the game and ask the coach(es) to quiet the offending spectator.

2nd Infraction:

A verbal warning. The referee shall stop the match and ask the coach(es) to warn the spectator that the next infraction will be an ejection or the referee will abandon the match.

3rd Infraction:

The referee shall instruct the coach(es) to direct the spectator to leave the area. The referee shall abandon the match if the spectator does not comply.

c) Coaches are highly encouraged to submit referee evaluations (good and bad) with-in 48 hours of the completion of the match – see MYSL rule 31.

d) MYSL recommends that the referee deal with coach(es) and spectator(s) infractions in accordance with IFAB Law 5 of the Game.

e) If the referee abandons the match, directs a person to leave the area, or issues a caution, the referee shall send a misconduct report for review – see MYSL Rule 29. MYSL asks that the information provided by the referee in the misconduct report be sufficient and detailed to determine follow-up actions required by the MYSL Commissioners, Age Directors, and/or Sportsmanship Committee. A review of the reported incident may result in a penalty up to and including suspension, and/or forfeit of the match. Additionally, unsporting behavior from coaches, players, referees, or spectators towards others will also not be tolerated and shall be reported to the MYSL Commissioners, Age Directors, and/or Sportsmanship Committee for review. This review may result in a penalty up to and including suspension and/or forfeit of the match.

If it is found that multiple incidents involving coaches, spectators, players, teams from the same organization have violated this policy, additional penalties, including monetary fines, may be assessed toward the organization.

f) Referee abuse and assault (USSF Policy 531-9—Misconduct Toward Game Officials)

1. Referee assault is defined by USSF as:

(i) Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.

(ii) For purposes of this policy, “intentional act” shall mean an act intended to bring about a result which will invade the interests of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.

(iii) 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; head butting; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee’s uniform or personal property, i.e. car, equipment, etc.

2. Referee abuse is defined by USSF as:

(i) 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.

(ii) Abuse includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward 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.

(3) When any amateur or professional player, coach, manager, club official or game official assaults or abuses a referee, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately with Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association.

(4) When an allegation of assault is verified by Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, the person is automatically suspended until the hearing on the assault.