



MIDLANDS SOCCER OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

LEXINGTON - RICHLAND AND SURROUNDING COUNTIES

CHAPIN, SC 29026

REFEREE ABUSE - DEALING WITH SPECTATORS

The Laws of the Game give the referee the authority to caution (yellow card) or dismiss (red card) players, substitutes, and coaches. The Laws of the Game **DO NOT** give the referee authority over spectators. The referee should never directly address a spectator.

Referees **MUST** address any verbal abuse from spectators directed at the referee or referee crew to the coaches or field administrators.

Referee abuse has proven to be a negative issue in recruiting, training and more importantly retaining referees. The referee community loses 60% of all first year referees. Referee abuse during the match negatively effects players, coaches, and the ability of the coaches to coach their teams during the match.

The criteria for referee abuse directed at any member of the referee crew is determined by the Public, Personal or Provocative nature of the abuse. The process used to address the issue is to: **ASK, TELL, then DISMISS** the person or persons involved. The referee has the authority to immediately **DISMISS** if the abuse rises to that level.

The progression to follow in managing referee abuse :

ASK: The referee Communicates the spectator's behavior to the coach or both coaches if neither recognizes the spectator(s). Communicate to the Coach the statement being made and a description of the spectator(s). If needed, suspend the match until the Coach or both Coaches Communicate to the spectator(s) the consequences of their behavior.

TELL: At the next stoppage of play. The referee suspends the match, beckons both coaches to the halfway line. The referee strongly Communicate to the Coach or both Coaches, the match will not continue until the identified spectator(s) are removed from the surround of the playing area.

Allow the coach time (2 minutes) to ask the spectator(s) to leave or the match will be abandoned and a report filed with the governing body of the match. If the spectator(s) are removed from the match and its surrounds, restart play with the proper restart and add time for the suspension of play.

DISMISS: If the spectator(s) is not removed, or the coach continues irresponsible behavior. Blow the whistle three times and communicate to the coaches "the match is abandoned!"

Without further discussion gather your referee crew and belongings and leave the area. Immediately contact your referee assgnor or Area Referee Administrator. With the assistance of your referee crew make note of the words and/or irresponsible behavior and the time the match was abandoned.

* If the abuse continues or you feel threatened as you leave the area, **set your phone camera to video**, record anyone who threatens you and move quickly out of the area. If needed, call 911 and request a police officer be sent to your location. A safe area may be an adjoining field with a senior referee.



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PROBLEM SPECTATOR REPORT OF ABUSE FORM

Your Name :

Phone Number :

Your Email :

Your Position : (Referee, Asst. Referee, 4th Official)

GAME INFORMATION

League :

Date:

Time :

Game Number :

Age Group :

Game Site :

Home Team :

Away Team :

Coaches Name :

CoachesTeam :

Abandoned Gametime:

Referee Abuse:

is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in boldily contact. It implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment.

- Verbal and nonverbal communication which contains foul or abusive language and which implies or directly threatens physical harm;
- throwing a beverage on or spitting at a referee or the referees personal property;
- remarks such as " I'll get you after the game," or " You won't get out of here in one piece."

These examples qualify as an immediate ejection from a match along with this referee report

STOP this early in the match as it will spread into the players, and fans!

Referee Assault: is an "intentional act" of physical violence at or upon a referee.

US Soccer defines an "intentional act" as an act intended to bring about a result which will invade the interest of another in way that is socially unacceptable. The unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.

Examples:

- Striking, kicking, choking, head butting, grabbing, or bodily running into the referee;
- spitting on or at a referee with an intent to do so;
- kicking or throwing an object at an official that could inflict injury;
- damaging the referee's uniform or personal property (e.g., car, uniform, equipment).

These examples qualify as an immediate ejection from a match along with this referee report

Referee Notes and description of Abuse/Assault:

When filling out the Referee Report of Abuse Form be sure to add in the time during the match in which the incident occurred. Use the exact words the person who was ejected used towards you or a member of the officiating crew. DO NOT use abreviations for foul language. If you write the coach called me the "B" word that could be "bat, baby, building,. etc". If the coach used the "F" word, write the complete word out. If you do not, the report could be thrown out. It is CRITICAL to get the information on the form CORRECT. Get with your referee crew after the match and compare notes. If needed, type up a separate page should you feel it necessary.

Who to send the report to:

Once you have had a chance to fill out the report, save it, and take about 4 or 5 hours to cool down, re-read your statement for accuracy and content.

If you are satisfied with your statement, send it to the following people:

Your local ARA (Joe Balazs in the Midlands)

Your Assignor (the one who gave you the game)

MSOA so we can keep track of problem coaches

ARA: joebalazs@aol.com

Assignors: denniscook@aol.com (Dennis C)

referees.lexsc@gmail.com (Brian P)

admin@columbiasoccer.org (Sofia H)

Guidance for the Referee Abuse and Assault Form:**Authority of the Referee: LOTG 2022/2023 Law 5: 3. Disciplinary Action (pg.60)**

- takes action against team officials who fail to act in a responsible manner and warns or shows a yellow card for a caution or a red card for a sending-off from the field of play and its immediate surrounds, including the technical area; if the offender cannot be identified, the senior coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction.

* When issuing a caution or red card to a coach or team official, DO NOT engage in an Extended Discussion. State the message and return to the center of the field.

** If issuing a red card, ejection to a coach and they refuse to leave the immediate surrounds, abandon the match. DO NOT go toward your bags or equipment until that team leaves the area. If possible, send AR2,

Venting (Frustration) vs Complaining:

There is a fine line between venting and complaining. On the receiving end, they can look similar because venting and complaining share some of the same emotions such as, anger, and frustration. Venting is less frequent; it is a sharing of a feeling. When a coach is venting, they really don't want an answer. "Come on REF, you missed that foul." Coaches who complain just love to complain.

* be aware that a coach who has said nothing in the first half of the match to your calls and in the second half of the match yells out "come on ref, number 11 is holding." Your response could be, "Okay coach, got it, thank you." You have acknowledged his comment and perhaps the coach has a valid point.

Authority of the Referee: LOTG 2022/2023 Law 12: Warning - Caution - Sending Off (pg.107)

Warning: (The following offenses should usually result in a warning. Repeated or blatant offenses should result in a caution or sending-off)

- entering the field of play in a respectful/non-confrontation manner
- failing to cooperate with a match official; ignoring instructions/requests from an assistant referee or fourth official,
- minor low-level disagreement (word or action) with a decision
- occasionally leaving the confines of the technical area without committing another offense

Caution:

- clearly / persistently not respecting the confines of their team's technical area
- delaying the restart of play by their team
- dissent by word or action including: throwing/kicking bottles or other objects in the tech area, actions which show disrespect to match officials, or sarcastic clapping
- excessively / persistently gesturing for a yellow or red card

- acting in a provocative or inflammatory behavior
- showing lack of respect for the game

Sending-Off:

- deliberately leaving the technical area to : show disrespect towards or argue with a match official, act in a provocative or inflammatory manner
- deliberately throwing/kicking an object onto the field

