



WYOMING SOCCER ASSOCIATION

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

This policy intends to prevent abuse and physical assault of officials in the leagues, tournaments and other club events sanctioned by the Wyoming Soccer Association (WSA, or Association). This policy applies to all coaches, players, parents, spectators and other supporters effective immediately.

The ultimate responsibility for the actions of coaches, players and spectators resides with the member clubs. It is the responsibility of the coaches to provide support of officials and spectator control, and it is the responsibility of the member clubs to provide instructions to their coaches on how they are expected to carry this out. This policy applies before, during and after the game at the soccer field and its immediate surrounding areas.

Communication between officials and team personnel when conducted in the proper manner is essential in managing a match. However, when said communication become disrespectful, disruptive, or detrimental to the game in a public, personal or provocative manner, the communication becomes abuse. Examples include use of intimidating or obscene language, continual criticism of official's decisions, public criticism of official's decisions, and other negative verbal comments or gestures.

Abuse of game officials by coaches, players, parents, spectators and other supporters will not be tolerated in WSA sanctioned events. Any comments that are racist or discriminatory in nature will be considered as serious verbal abuse and dealt with accordingly.

Guidelines for Parents & Spectators

Behaviors considered to be disrespectful and/or detrimental to the game may include:

1. Publicly disputing calls during or after the game.
2. Use of profane or obscene language.
3. Challenging remarks directed at the referee(s), including criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation or negative feedback of any kind before, during or after the game.
4. Remarks to the referee(s) or advising the referee(s) to watch certain players or attend to rough play.
5. Derogatory comments to players of either team.

Parents and spectators may respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation, until such time as the referee terminates the conversation.

Parents and spectators may point out an emergency or safety issues, such as a player apparently injured on the field or observed fighting.

Penalties (Parents & Spectators)

WSA recommends that officials work through coaches or administrative agents to address spectator's disrespectful behavior and/or behavior detrimental to the game. If efforts to involve a coach are not effective, it is recommended that administrative personnel be recruited, for example a field marshal. While this approach is preferable, officials may directly address spectator's behavior if circumstances warrant.

Depending on the severity of the behavior, the referee may take any of the following actions:

- a. The referee may request the coach of offending party's team to issue a verbal warning.
- b. The referee may stop the game and instruct the coaches to direct the parent/spectator to leave the area of the field.
- c. The referee may request administrative agents to take these same actions.
- d. The referee may take these same actions directly with spectators if warranted.
- e. The referee may suspend or abandon the game if, after so being directed, the parent/spectator does not leave the area of the field.

Players

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 but may in no case be less severe than penalties established by FIFA, USSF, or WSA.

Team Personnel (Coaches, Assistant Coaches & Others on the roster)

It is the responsibility of all coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players and supporters in all matches. Failure to do so undermines the integrity of the game and the referee's authority, and can result in a hostile environment for players, the referee(s), coaches, assistant coaches, bench personnel and spectators.

As role models for all of the participants and spectators, coaches participating in Wyoming Soccer Association sanctioned events are expected to be supportive of, and to acknowledge the effort, good play and sportsmanship on the part of ALL players from either team in a contest. They are expected to show by example that while competing, they have respect for their opponent, referees and spectators at all times. The Wyoming Soccer Association will not tolerate negative behavior exhibited either by demonstrative actions and gestures, or by provocative remarks, including those addressed toward the referees or members of an opposing team. Coaches exhibiting disrespectful behavior toward referees, opposing players or coaches, and/or behavior detrimental to the game will be subject to sanction by the match officials and may be dismissed for irresponsible behavior.

- Coaches may respectfully address the Referee(s) during the game at an appropriate time and in a non-distracting manner to:
 - a. Respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation.
 - b. Point out emergency or safety issues.
 - c. Make substitutions.
 - d. Ask for clarification of proper procedures (e.g. restarts: direction, Indirect or Direct Free Kick)?
 - e. Ask for the time remaining in the half.
- Coaches are allowed to ask a referee after a game or during the halftime interval, in a polite and constructive way, to explain a law or foul.
 - a. Polite and friendly concern can be exchanged with the referee. However, if the polite tone of the conversation changes, the referee may abandon the exchange at any time. Absolutely no sarcasm, harassment or intimidation is allowed

NOTE: It is recommended that coaches or other team members do not engage in any evaluative conversation with the officials once the match has concluded.

Penalties for Team Personnel (Coaches, Assistant Coaches & Others on Roster)

Depending on the severity of the behavior, the referee may take any of the following actions, as prescribed by USSF:

1. The referee may issue a verbal warning to team personnel by asking for problem behavior to be corrected.
2. The referee may tell team officials to correct problem behavior;
3. The referee may dismiss team personnel for irresponsible behavior. Once dismissed, the individual will be required to leave the area of the field immediately.

NOTE: Unless otherwise stated in local competition rules, referees are not to display cards to bench personnel.

4. The referee should suspend or abandon the game if team personnel do not leave the field and adjoining area after having been instructed to do so.

If dismissed, additional sanctions may be imposed after a review of the match report by the club that the coach or assistant coach represents, by the league administrator, tournament director (during event) and/or Wyoming Soccer Association. These penalties may be no less stringent than sanctions as may be imposed by WSA following their review, if conducted, of the incident.

COURSE OF ACTION

All cases of alleged abuse or assault of a referee shall be reported to the WSA State Office and State Referee Administrator within 48 hours of when the behavior occurred. WSA will then conduct a verification of the complaint and subsequent actions as required by applicable sections of USSF Policy in effect at the time of the incident. Although WSA is continually bound by USSF Policy and its various revisions, definition of referee abuse and referee assault found in USSF Policy 531-9 as of the acceptance date of this Zero Tolerance Policy is offered for information as follows:

Referee Abuse, definition:

- 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.
- 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 physical property; or spitting at (but not on) the referee.

Referee Assault, definition:

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