

# AYSO Region 9



**APPROVED**

To: Region 9 Board of Directors

From: Steven S. Cruise, Regional Referee Administrator

Date: November 12, 2008

Re: Referee Dissent and Abuse Policy

## Memo

Every year the referees have to deal with dissent and abuse by spectators and coaches. The veteran referees seem to ignore it and the new referees don't know how to handle it. The problem with this is a lack of consistency.

### **Referee Dissent and Abuse Guidelines**

The following guideline has been established on November 12, 2008 for all Region 9 referees. The guideline applies to all Region 9 Under-7 through Under-14 regular AYSO matches. The guideline is:

- The coach shall be warned once if they, or any spectator on their sideline, behave irresponsibly though dissent or verbal abuse by word or action.
- A repeat offence shall result in the coach being expelled from the match.
- Any serious verbal abuse (e.g. using offensive, insulting, or foul language or repeated incidents of less serious abuse) or any threat directed towards a referee by a spectator or coach or shall result in the immediate dismissal of the coach from the match without warning.

Asking the referee about a call or complaining about a call in earshot of the Assistant Referee or the Referee - whether it is directed at the referee or not - is considered dissent and shall result in a warning.

Neither the coach nor the spectators are entitled to an explanation of the call. The Referee team makes a decision, signals for the proper restart, and play resumes. If the Assistant Referee hears the dissent or abuse, then they will report this to the Referee at the next, best opportunity.

Referees are reminded, however, "there are often times when a simple gesture or word of guidance can aid communication and contribute to a greater understanding-and more respect-to the mutual benefit of referee and players."

The Referee shall issue any warnings or dismissals. Referees are reminded to avoid

confrontation with coaches, and that "(a)pplication of the spirit of the law is far more important than rote application of letter of the law. Do not argue, become emotional, or get angry. Stay calm, cool, and collected. Issue the warning discretely if possible.

### **Disciplinary Sanctions for Referee Abuse**

Upon receipt of any reported abuse of a referee, either by ejection or by report from the Regional Referee Administrator, a Disciplinary Committee will be formed to investigate the incident. The Disciplinary Committee shall determine the appropriate discipline decision, before the next game if possible. The offending person, the Divisional Commissioner, Regional Coach Administrator, Regional Referee Administrator, Regional Commissioner, and the Region 9 Child Protection Advocate shall be notified of the disciplinary action.

The following sanctions will be applied until and unless modified by the Disciplinary Committee convened to hear the matter:

- Verbal Abuse of a referee (serious, repetitious dissent to provoke an argument, criticism or demeaning language but which does not include offensive, insulting, or foul language) = first offense 1 game/week suspension
- Serious verbal abuse of a referee (e.g. using offensive, insulting, or foul language or repeated incident of less serious abuse) = a two (2) game/week suspension. A Disciplinary Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions is possible.
- Stepping onto the field or other threat toward a referee (by word or action) = a four (4) game/week suspension. Disciplinary Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions and, if required, by a letter of apology to the referee, any specified form of appropriate apology to the players, coaches and parents of the teams affected by the conduct.
- Immediate and sincere remorse on the part of the offender may be taken into account by the Disciplinary Committee when determining whether a lesser level of sanction should be applied.

Egregious offenses (e.g. repeated or multiple abusive situation, physical contact with a youth referee, or exceptionally inappropriate misbehavior directed toward a referee) shall result in immediate and continuing suspension of the offending person pending a Disciplinary Committee hearing. The Disciplinary Committee will determine if further or more serious discipline is warranted.

An egregious offense violates the fundamental mission of AYSO and requires strong action. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, suspension for the season, suspension for multiple seasons, "rehabilitation" (e.g. taking the child/volunteer protection training, taking referee training, referee a set number of games, or other remedial education and training), or expulsion of the person and/or their child from further participation in AYSO.

A suspended parent or other non-coach may not, during their suspension, attend a game of the team at whose game the conduct occurred; that adult may attend other children's games in other age groups.

A suspended coach may not, during the suspension, engage in any AYSO related activities, including but not limited to: attending practices or coaching other AYSO teams.

These sanctions apply only to the discipline of adult spectators or coaches. This policy does not apply to AYSO players or youth (under age 18) spectators.

These sanctions do not limit, prevent, or replace any voluntary or required report or referral of improper conduct, by any adult toward any child, to any law enforcement or child protection agency.