



## Youth Referee Abuse Policy



### Background

1. AYSO referees, including youth referees, are volunteers charged with the responsibility to see that games are conducted safely and fairly, and in a manner that fosters the enjoyment of the game by the players, coaches and spectators.
2. Individual abilities will vary, depending on their training, experience and personality. Regardless of their abilities, the referee is empowered by the Laws of the Game to control the match, enforce the Laws, and to take action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner (AYSO Laws of The Game, Law 5).
3. Coaches are responsible for the behavior and conduct of their spectators. It is never acceptable to verbally abuse a referee or player. A coach/spectator may not, before, during or after a game, criticize or discuss with a youth referee his performance other than to thank or compliment the referee.
4. If considered necessary, complaints, criticisms or recommendations concerning a youth referee's performance shall be directed to the Regional Referee Administrator or the Director of Youth Referees.
5. While dissent, either by word or action with, and public criticism of a referee is never appropriate, abusive language or conduct directed toward a youth referee will not be tolerated. Abusive language can be, but not limited to, rude speech, critical language (including yelling) addressed to the youth referee, and expressing disapproval or blame.
6. The Area Referee Administrator, upon receipt of any reported abuse of a youth referee shall investigate the incident, consult with the Disciplinary Committee, and shall implement appropriate discipline, before the next game if possible. The offending person and the Disciplinary Committee shall be notified of the disciplinary action.



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## Misconduct and disciplinary action

1. The disciplinary action as determined by the Disciplinary Committee, may include, but not limited to, the following:

<i>Type of Misconduct</i>	<i>Recommended Disciplinary Action</i>
(I) Repetitive dissent by word or action, provoking an argument, criticism of, or demeaning language toward a youth referee.	1st offense, 1 game suspension
(II) The use of offensive, abusive, insulting, or foul language toward a youth referee, public ridicule, or a second incident of less serious misconduct.	2 game suspension – Disciplinary Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions. insulting, or foul language toward a youth referee, public ridicule, or a second incident of less serious misconduct. Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.
(III) Entering the field to intimidate, or other threat to the youth referee (by word or action).	4 game suspension – Disciplinary Committee hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions and, if required, by a letter of apology to the youth referee, and any players, coaches and parents of the teams affected by the conduct.

2. 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.
3. Egregious offenses (e.g. repeated misconducts or multiple abusive situations, physical contact with a youth referee, or exceptionally inappropriate misbehavior directed toward a youth 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 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.
4. A suspended parent/spectator (including the coach) may not, during their suspension, attend any Area Q AYSO game or Inter-Area game where an Area Q is participating. However, a suspended coach may attend team practices.
5. The Area Board of Directors shall be notified of all suspension at its next regular meeting and shall, subject to any further action of the Disciplinary Committee and any right of appeal, enforce the disciplinary action.
6. 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.
7. 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.