



Stryker Sports Complex and Wichita Regional Soccer Association (WRSA) Referee Abuse Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of this Referee Abuse Policy is to make clear that verbal abuse or negative criticism of referees is as unacceptable as verbal abuse or negative criticism of players. This policy adopts basic standard sanctions for improper conduct.

This policy is not intended to imply that referees are always “right”, and the spectator or coach is always “wrong”. Just as players make mistakes during play, referees will make mistakes in officiating, particularly in the younger divisions where they are learning how to referee. Due to a shortage of referees, a referee may be officiating at a higher-level game than they are comfortable with. They must receive positive support from coaches and spectators to continue to grow as an official.

It is never acceptable to abuse or criticize referees, verbally or otherwise, in any situation. Stryker Sports Complex and Wichita Regional Soccer Association (WRSA) will not tolerate any verbal or other abuse, or criticism of referee by any coach or spectator. There are appropriate avenues for coaches to share concerns about the quality of officiating. The WRSA Referee Advancement Committee (RAC) welcomes constructive comments about the referees. The WRSA Director of Officials will review all feedback received regarding officials and their performance. Feedback can be given on our website and should be submitted only by team coaches.

Policy on Referee Abuse

Youth Referees: Although abuse towards any referee will not be tolerated, any abuse towards a youth referee will result in more severe disciplinary actions by the WRSA RAC. A Coach or spectator may only communicate in a positive way with a youth referee. The coach is responsible for ensuring all spectators associated with his/her team follow these guidelines relating to communication with a youth referee. A coach/spectator may not express any disagreement or dissatisfaction with the officiating to the youth referee. A coach/spectator may not, before, during, or after a game, discuss with a youth referee their critique of the referee’s performance, other than to thank and compliment the referee.

Any WRSA Staff Member or USSF-certified Adult Referee present at the game shall, if necessary, intervene if any coach, spectator, or other adult is criticizing or abusing a youth referee, verbally or otherwise and may take immediate appropriate action. This may include directing the offender to leave the site, and/or suspending or terminating the game.

Any concerns about the quality of officiating of a youth referee must be addressed to the WRSA Director of Officials or a WRSA RAC member by the coach.

Anyone observing behavior not following these guidelines should immediately report the incident to the WRSA staff on duty so that situation can be handled appropriately. Please report to the concession stand if a staff member isn’t near and a Field Marshall will be contacted.

At the discretion of the center referee or WRSA RAC Member, a warning may be given, **but is not required**, for a first time violation of this policy. The Center Referee or WRSA RAC Member who

witnesses any abuse of a referee may remove the offending party from the premises. The Police should be called for anyone who refuses to leave the premises.

Disciplinary Sanctions for Referee Abuse

Any WRSA Staff member or Field Marshall, upon receipt of any reported abuse of a referee shall report the incident to the WRSA RAC, who shall implement appropriate discipline before the next game if possible.

The following sanctions will be applied unless modified upon review of the incident by WRSA RAC.

Type of Abuse	Recommended Sanction
Criticism, heckling, or verbal abuse of a referee (not including offensive, insulting, or foul-language) First Offense	Completion of <i>Do Better Next Time</i> questionnaire online with confirmation of completion from WRSA RAC.
Serious verbal abuse of a referee (e.g. using offensive, insulting, or foul language), or repeated offense of less serious abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 game suspension. • WRSA RAC hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.
Coming onto the field to confront an adult referee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 2 game suspension. • WRSA RAC hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions.
Coming onto the field to confront a youth referee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 4 game suspension • WRSA RAC hearing to consider additional sanctions and/or remedial actions. • A letter of apology to the youth referee. • Any specified form of appropriate apology to the players, coaches, and parents of the teams affected by the conduct.
Threatening any referee (by word or action)	WRSA RAC Hearing

Egregious offenses (e.g. repeated or multiple abusive situations, physical contact with a referee, or exceptionally inappropriate behavior directed toward a referee) shall result in immediate and continuing suspension of the offending person pending a thorough review. The WRSA RAC will determine if further or more serious discipline is warranted. An egregious offense violates the fundamental mission of WRSA and requires strong action. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, suspension for the season, suspension for multiple seasons, or lifetime bans.

These sanctions apply only to the discipline of spectators and coaches. Sanctions necessary for any player will be dealt with using the Red Card Policy from the WRSA Rules. A plea of ignorance to this policy is not sufficient, and violators may expect appropriate action by the WRSA RAC. These sanctions do not limit, prevent, or replace any voluntary or required report or referral of improper conduct, by an adult toward any child, to any law enforcement or child protection agency.