



Zero Tolerance Policy

To help prevent physical assault and verbal abuse in the leagues and clubs within the New York State West Youth Soccer Association (NYSWYSA, or Association); the Association has adopted a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY. This policy applies to all coaches, players, parents, spectators and other supporters and referees effective with the 2009 season.

Abusive and obscene language, violent play/conduct, fighting and other behavior (including, but not limited to, sarcasm, taunting, etc.) deemed detrimental to the game between the above-mentioned groups will not be tolerated. 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 referee support 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.

Parents & Spectators

No parent or spectator shall persistently address the referee or assistant referees at any time. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Parents and spectators shall not dispute calls during or after the game.
- b. Parents and spectators shall not make remarks to the referee(s) or advise the referee(s) to watch certain players or attend to rough play.
- c. Parents and spectators shall never yell at the referee(s), including criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation or feedback of any kind before, during or after the game.

The only allowable exceptions to the above are:

- a. Parents and spectators may respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation, until such time as the referee terminates the conversation.
- b. Parents and spectators may point out an emergency or safety issues, such as a player apparently injured on the field or observed fighting.

Additionally, parents and spectators shall not make derogatory comments to players of either team.

Penalties (Parents & Spectators)

In the opinion of the referee, depending on the severity of the offense, the referee may take any of the following actions:

- a. The referee may issue a verbal warning to the coach of offending party's team.
- b. The referee may stop the game and instruct the coaches to direct the parent/spectator to leave the field.
- c. The referee may abandon the game if the parent/spectator does not leave 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 the Association.

Coaches, Assistant Coaches & Bench Personnel

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 referee's authority and the integrity of the game, resulting 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 a New York State West Youth Soccer Association-sanctioned event 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. By example, coaches, assistant coaches and bench personnel are expected to show that although they are competing in a game, they have respect for their opponent, referees and spectators at all times. The New York State West Youth Soccer Association will not tolerate negative behavior exhibited either by demonstrative actions and gestures, or by ill-intentioned remarks, including those addressed toward the referees or members of an opposing team. Coaches exhibiting hostile, negative, sarcastic or otherwise ill-intended behavior toward referees, opposing players or coaches will be subject to sanction by the match official. Additional sanctions may be imposed by the club that the coach or assistant coach represents, the league that the match is being played under, or as allowed by New York State West Youth Soccer Association policies after a review of the match report.

Coaches shall not interact directly or indirectly with the coaches or players of the opposing team during the game in any manner that may be construed as negative, hostile or sarcastic, either by way of demonstrative actions and gestures or by ill-intentioned remarks.

Coaches shall not offer dissent to any call made by the referee(s) at any time.

Coaches are not to address the Referee(s) during the game except to:

- a. Respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation.
- b. Point out emergency or safety issues.
- c. Make substitutions.
- d. Ask the referee, "What is the proper restart (i.e. direction and Indirect Free Kick 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, but not judgment calls made in the game.

- a. Polite and friendly concern can be exchanged with the referee. If the polite tone of the conversation changes, the referee may abandon the exchange at any time.
- b. Absolutely no sarcasm, harassment or intimidation is allowed.

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

Referee Abuse

(a) 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.

(b) 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

(a) (i) Referee Assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.

(ii) 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.

(b) 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.

Penalties (Coaches, Assistant Coaches & Bench Personnel)

In the opinion of the referee, depending on the severity of the offense, the referee may take any of the following actions:

a. The referee may issue a verbal warning to the offending coach, assistant coach or bench personnel.

b. The referee may eject the offending coach, assistant coach or bench personnel. Once ejected, the individual will be required to leave the field immediately. NOTE: Referees are instructed not to display any cards to bench personnel. They are strictly reserved for players and substitutes.

c. The referee should abandon the game, if the coach, assistant coach or bench personnel do not leave the field or any immediate adjoining area after having been instructed to do so. Additional penalties associated with the ejection of a coach, assistant coach or bench personnel may be assessed by the local club or league which sanctioned the match in accordance with their documented policy. These penalties may be no less stringent than sanctions as may be imposed by the Association following their review, if conducted, of the incident. All cases of alleged abuse or assault of a referee shall be reported to the NYSWYSA State Office and State Referee Administrator within 48 hours of the match that engendered said behavior. The Association 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 the Association 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 creation date of this Zero Tolerance Policy is offered by way of information as follows:



Zero Tolerance Policy Addendum

The Monroe United Recreational Soccer League (MURSL) follows the policies and regulations of the New York State West Youth Soccer Association, with minor modifications, to better suit the recreational and developmental objectives of its member organizations.

This includes their Zero Tolerance Policy, published in 2009. This policy is one of strictly prescribed rules of conduct and consequences. It is aimed at eliminating the increasing incidents of bad behaviors by coaches, parents and other spectators, toward each other, and particularly toward referees.

In addition, from its recreational perspective, the MURSL adds to the Zero Tolerance Policy the following factors for interpretation and application:

- Substitute the first sentence of the NYSWYSA document with, “To preserve the Fun and Enjoyment of the game of soccer, the MURSL has adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy.”
- The MURSL provides a low-key environment, and a non-competitive structure, which allows players, coaches, and parents, to discover the fun and friendship of team play, cooperative organization, and sportsmanship, often for the first time as a family. The primary purpose of the Zero Tolerance Policy is to preserve this environment, so the enforcement and administration of the Policy itself, should not overshadow or detract from the healthy and relaxed nature of this activity.
- The referees serving the younger age brackets of the MURSL: (U8’s, U10’s, and U12’s), will generally be some of the youngest, and therefore the least experienced among the corps of referees. While everyone else is having fun, the referee is the only one on the soccer field who is being continually evaluated by him or herself, as well as everyone else at the field, as they undergo “On-the-Job-Training”. The adults present should ask themselves if they have ever been similarly evaluated while they were learning their occupation.
- Parents are reminded that their role is to be supportive of the efforts of all the participants, their child, the opponents, the volunteer coaches and the referee. Whether they show their support by cheering, speaking a quiet word, or by silence, they can promote positive outcomes, and the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved.
- When conduct occurs which is in violation of the Zero Tolerance Policy, prompt action will be taken by the leadership of the clubs, or town organizations involved, along with designees from the League. Sanctions towards any violator of Zero Tolerance will focus on instruction about the requirements and benefits of the Policy, and ensuring that the behavior will not be repeated. These sanctions may include actions such as a warning, apology, suspension from participation, or complete removal from the activities of the Club and/or the League. The process of investigating the incident, and the sanctions applied, will be documented by the Executive Board and available for review by member Club representatives.