

CMSA Zero Tolerance on Referee Abuse

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Zero Tolerance on Referee Abuse

Summary

The Calgary Minor Soccer Association (CMSA) is committed to fostering a safe and respectful environment for all participants, including referees. Recognizing the vital role referees play in the sport, CMSA is implementing a **Zero Tolerance on Referee Abuse** to protect referees from both physical and verbal abuse, and to discourage public dissent. Even though public dissent may not be considered abuse, it is not in adherence with the CMSA Code of Conduct and therefore will not be tolerated. This policy extends to all CMSA member club representatives, players, and spectators, emphasizing the importance of constructive feedback through appropriate channels.

While the Zero Tolerance of Referee Abuse extends to all referees, we are further emphasizing the behaviour towards youth referees. CMSA's youth referee development is a central focus of its referee program, committing to a robust mentorship initiative and Teal Shirt campaign as a means to acknowledge and support the needs of our youth referees on their journey to excellence. Therefore, abuse or dissent of referees prior to, during, or after any CMSA sanctioned game will not be tolerated. Guidelines for disciplinary action range from match suspensions for verbal abuse to expulsion from CMSA for threatening, attempted, or physical behaviour towards a referee. Sanctions can be found in CMSA's Discipline Code.

Purpose

This policy aims to eliminate all forms of referee abuse, upholding the CMSA Code of Conduct and ensuring the sport's integrity. It aims to foster a nurturing environment for youth referees, acknowledging their developmental stage, and the need for an environment where referees can make mistakes without fear of abuse, much like we would not accept a coach or spectator verbally abusing a player for their mistakes. Our goal is to create a positive atmosphere for all participants, and we are focused on boosting our referee numbers to facilitate the growth of the sport. Abuse or dissent towards referees undermines the spirit of the game, the development of referees, and efforts to create a respectful environment, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

This policy is not intended to imply that referees are always right, and the players, adult spectators or coaches are always wrong. However, we must remember that just as youth players will make mistakes during play, youth referees will make mistakes in officiating, particularly in the younger divisions where they are in the early stages of gaining the experience needed to excel as referees.

Zero Tolerance on Referee Abuse

Persistent questioning of decisions, questioning the interpretation of the Laws of the Game, physical contact, attempted physical contact, threatening behaviour, or other verbally abusive, offensive, or insulting comments shall be considered abuse. All CMSA member club representatives, players, other referees, field marshal, and/or spectators, shall be empowered to intervene if a referee is being abused.

Any person may report instances of referee abuse, with as much detail as possible through the Referee Abuse Reporting Form as found on the CMSA Website. Referees will continue reporting incidents using the appropriate method (Misconduct Reports, Referee Abuse Reporting Form etc.). CMSA will conduct investigations into these reports to reach a conclusion.

The offending party will be notified along with their Member Club of any disciplinary action. The discipline outlined in the CMSA Rules and Regulations Discipline Code are the minimum sanctions, and, depending on the severity and frequency of the situation with the individual or Member Club, CMSA has the authority to increase the sanction(s) given the circumstances.

Egregious offences, such as multiple abusive situations, attempted or physical contact with a referee, or exceptional misbehaviour directed toward a referee, shall result in immediate suspension of the offending party by CMSA until the case is adjudicated. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, reporting to Alberta Soccer Association, game suspension(s), time suspension, fines and/or bonds, suspension until hearing, any other discipline as applied by the Discipline Committee.

Any abuse of referees that are under the age of 18 will be treated severely with a minimum sanction of double the discipline outlined in the CMSA Rules and Regulations.

This policy only applies to all members of CMSA and their affiliates. The Laws of the Game specify actions that can be taken, including a red card dismissal, for player misconduct that occurs anywhere, at any time.

Sanctions may be administered by CMSA even when match ejections (red cards) have not occurred.

Repeated breaches of the Zero Tolerance Policy on Referee Abuse will result in increased sanctions for both the individual and Member Club.

CMSA Referees and Referee Mentors, when encountering behaviour they feel is abusive, as outlined above, shall have the following authorities:

- Calling for a time out in the match where both teams and coaches will be brought together and the game restarted only after agreement is made by all team officials and players to conduct themselves in a respectful manner.
- Abandon the match where one or both teams will receive no points. The game will not be rescheduled.