



ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

Effective: January 18th, 2023 **Last Revision:** 1/18/2023
Scope: This policy is in effect for all SC Youth Soccer events.
Authority: Pursuant to the International Football Association Board (IFAB) Laws of the Game, Law 5 | The Referee | Section 3. Powers and duties

Section 1. Purpose

- a) The aim of this policy is to prevent outside interference, including but not limited to the harassment of officials that involves spectators in all SC Youth Soccer events. SC Youth Soccer wants to promote an environment that is conducive to the development and retention of referees, players, and coaches.
- b) This policy does not imply that a referee is without fault or error. We acknowledge that mistakes are a natural part of the game for players, coaches and referees. Everyone engaged with SC Youth Soccer must be focused on creating a safe environment for the youth players, referees and coaches in South Carolina.

Section 2. Harassment of Officials

- a) The harassment of an official may be defined by but is not limited to acts that:
 - i. Cause fear, humiliation, or annoyance
 - ii. Offend or degrade
 - iii. Are pejorative or demeaning
 - iv. Are verbally threatening
 - v. Infer physical harm
 - vi. Repeatedly announcing your disagreement with a call or lack thereof

Section 3. Removal

- a) Spectators in violation of Section 2 of this policy will be required to leave the complex. Any removed spectators responsible for the transportation of a youth player within the complex shall wait in their vehicle until the conclusion of the player's game.
- b) Prior to removal, officials may decide to issue a warning to the coach who is coaching the team of the offending spectator(s).



Section 4. Enforcement

- a) Upon an official acknowledging harassment by a spectator as outlined in Section 2, the process to remove the offending spectator will be as follows:
 - i. The referee will stop the game and ask the coach of the respective team to remove the spectator before play can resume.
 - ii. If the coach refuses to ask the spectator to leave, the game will be abandoned immediately.
 - iii. If the spectator refuses to comply with the provisions outlined in Section 3, the game will be abandoned immediately.
 - iv. Officials will not directly address any spectator.

Section 5. Reporting

- a) Depending on the age of the referee, reports of the incident submitted by the official to SC Youth Soccer may be escalated to outside authorities other than the U.S. Soccer Federation and SC Youth Soccer.
 - i. **ADULT:** Referee reports will be processed by SC Youth Soccer.
 - ii. **MINOR (17 or under):** Reports of harassment will be submitted to the Center for Safe Sport; The Center for Safe Sport has jurisdiction over claims of suspected abuse and other misconduct involving minors.

Section 6. Disciplinary Actions

- a) The following suspensions and fines will be issued to the offending spectator following receipt and review of the referee's report:
 - i. **First offense:** Banned from SC Youth Soccer events until the completion of an online referee abuse awareness course of SC Youth Soccer's choice and a fine of up to \$100.00.
 - ii. **Second offense:** \$250.00 fine and a 10-week ban.
 - iii. **Third offense:** \$500.00 fine and a possible lifetime ban from all SC Youth Soccer events.
- b) Individuals are suspended from all SC Youth Soccer events until the appropriate suspension and fine has been completed.
- c) If a game is abandoned for reasons outlined in Section 4, then a forfeit will occur for the team that the offending individual is affiliated with.

Section 7. Appeals



- a) First time offenders through a Club official must submit in writing an appeal within ten (10 days) of notice of the offense as outlined in Section 7 (b) below.
- b) Second and third-time offenders may appeal the suspension and fine outlined in Section 3 by following the steps below:
 - i. The offender is not allowed to attend any SC Youth Soccer events until the appeal process has concluded.
 - ii. Appeals may only be submitted by a Club Official (i.e., board member, director of coaching), and cannot be submitted by the offender.
 - iii. Appeals must be sent to scysa@scysa.org detailing clearly why the repeat offender's actions are not deserving of the suspension or fine issued.
- c) Any concerns or feedback regarding referees must be submitted in writing to the Administrator of that Competition.
 - i. Concerns related to referee performance or behavior will only be accepted from a Club Official (i.e. board member, director of coaching).