



## IOWA RUSH: PARENT PERSPECTIVE Referees

The following is an excerpt from a past *Iowa Soccer* communication:

*Referees are a valuable contributor to the legitimacy of a sporting contest. Despite this, abuse in sport has become a growing concern and is regularly noted as an obstacle with which referees must contend. Continuous abuse has been associated with referee withdrawal and has been noted as a key factor influencing the recruitment and retention of referees.*

The number of referees continues to shrink, while soccer continues to grow with more games played each year. This will continue to make the scenario of games without officials more commonplace, which disproportionately impact games at all levels.

A few things to consider before yelling at an official:

- While you might influence a referee's call in your favor, coaches and parents who consistently adopt this practice turn their players into mentally-fragile competitors, who seek excuses rather than solutions long-term.
- Verbally abusing referees during matches will create an environment which makes it difficult for coaches to teach players the game.
- Many of the games we play will be officiated by teenagers. How many other environments in society today is it acceptable for a forty-year-old man or woman to shout at, cuss at, or intimidate a fifteen-year-old boy or girl?
- Would you be in favor of a coach reacting to your child in the same way when he/she takes a bad touch or makes a questionable decision with the ball?

Our goal is to increase the pool of certified officials each year. One factor in reaching this goal will be creating a more positive atmosphere for boys and girls who are just starting out as officials. This environment is created through the actions of coaches and parents, which influence the perception the players have of the referee's role. Please keep this in mind as you unfold your chair and sit down on the sideline to watch a game.