

## Youth Volunteers - "Zero Tolerance" Abuse Policy

### Purpose of this policy:

Youth development is the central purpose of the AYSO program. This includes development of youth whether they are soccer players, soccer coaches, soccer referees or assistant referees. All the AYSO guidelines and policies on providing a "Safe, Fair and Fun" environment for players also apply to youth volunteers. Only "Positive, Instructive, and Encouraging" comments are allowed to be directed at youth players and volunteers. The purpose of this policy is to make clear that verbal abuse of youth volunteers is as unacceptable as verbal abuse of youth players and to adopt basic standard sanctions for improper conduct.

This policy is not intending to imply that youth volunteers are always "right" and the adult spectator is always "wrong". Just as youth players will make mistakes during play, youth volunteers will make a misinterpretation in officiating, particularly the younger divisions where they are learning how to referee or coach. In addition, sometimes youth volunteers are "in over their head" because of a particularly challenging game, an assignment beyond their experience or comfort level, etc..

### Policy on Youth Referee Abuse:

1. It is **NEVER** acceptable to abuse or criticize youth volunteers, verbally or otherwise, in any situation.
2. A coach or spectator should only communicate in a positive way and should not express any disagreement with the performance of a youth referee or coach. A coach or spectator should not, before, during or after a game, discuss with a youth referee or coach their critique of the youth's performance, other than to thank and compliment them.
3. Any criticism or critique of a youth volunteer's performance may only be communicated to the youth via a designated Mentor or Regional Board member. Adult referees or board members present at the game shall, if necessary, intervene if any coach, player, spectator or other adult is criticizing or abusing a youth volunteer, 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.
4. Any AYSO certified volunteer observing behavior not following these guidelines shall report the incident to a regional board member within 24 hours of the incident so that appropriate review can take place.
5. There are appropriate avenues for coaches or spectators to share concerns about the quality of youth volunteers. The regional board welcomes constructive feedback on any youth volunteer. The Region 253 website provides the necessary contact information.

### Disciplinary Sanctions for Youth Volunteer Abuse:

The region executive board, upon receipt of any reported abuse of a youth volunteer, shall investigate the incident and shall implement appropriate discipline, before the next game if possible. The offending person shall be notified of the disciplinary action in writing.

The following sanctions will be applied until and unless modified by an Appeals and Disciplinary Committee (A&D Committee) convened to hear the matter (see below).

Type of Abuse	First Offense	Second Offense
Verbal abuse of a youth volunteer (serious dissent, criticism or demeaning language but which DOES NOT include offensive, insulting or foul language).	1 game/week suspension. Additional or more serious disciplinary action may be added based on a review of each case.	Suspension for the remainder of the season. Additional or more serious discipline may be added based on a review of each case
Serious verbal abuse of a youth volunteer (using offensive, insulting or foul language).	Suspension for the remainder of the season. Additional or more serious discipline may be added based on a review of each case.	Any future offense of this nature, regardless of the time period between offenses, shall constitute immediate permanent removal of the offender from participation in the AYSO Region 253 Soccer Program.
Coming onto the field to confront the youth	Immediate permanent removal of the	

volunteer, or threatening the youth volunteer (by word or action).	offender from participation in AYSO Region 253 Soccer Program as well as contacting authorities if required.	
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**Supplementary Conditions:**

1. A suspended person may not, during their suspension, attend any AYSO Region 253 soccer game, located on any field. The suspended person may attend practices unless notified by additional restrictions by the Region Executive Board. NOTE: The term "may not attend" means the person may not be in view of the game.
2. These sanctions apply ONLY to the discipline of adult spectators, parents and coaches. Sanctions necessary for any youth players or spectators that exhibit inappropriate behavior will be issued by the Regional Board on a case by case basis and can range from verbal warning to permanent removal from the AYSO Region 253 Soccer Program.
3. These sanctions do not limit, prevent, or replace any voluntary or required report or referral of improper conduct, by any adult toward any child, to any law enforcement or child protection agency.
4. These sanctions may be reported to one or more levels of the AYSO organization - Area, Section and/or National - based on the review of each case.

**Right of Appeal:**

Any person suspended or permanently removed from AYSO Region 253 participation has the right to appeal for any sanctions imposed by the Regional Executive Board. All appeals must be made in writing to the Regional Commissioner within 72 hours of the sanction being imposed.

Upon receipt of appeal, the Regional Commissioner shall convene the Appeals and Disciplinary Committee (A&D Committee) to hear the matter. The A&D Committee is made up of the following:

- 1) Regional Referee Administrator
- 2) Regional Coach Administrator
- 3) One adult volunteer coach, as chosen by the Regional Coach Administrator.
- 4) One adult volunteer referee, as chosen by the Regional Referee Administrator.

The Regional Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA) and the Regional Commissioner shall also be present at any A&D Committee meeting in a non-voting capacity.

Upon convening, the A&D Committee shall review any documentation of the incident, including letters presented by spectators, players or other volunteers present during the incident. All A&D Committee meetings are closed to the public, but will be announced at least one week prior to convening in order to gather any additional documentation from interested parties.

The decision of the A&D Committee is final and no opportunity for additional appeal is available.