

## **Referee Abuse Policy (“RAP”) and Codes of Conduct**

Southborough Youth Soccer Association (SYSA) has adopted the Referee Abuse Policy (see below) for all SYSA age groups and teams. Coaches, players, parents and all members of the Southborough Youth Soccer community are expected to uphold this policy and respect the referee regardless of their age or experience. SYSA also has adopted the Mass Youth Soccer Codes of Conduct, which are linked below. All SYSA players, coaches, parents/guardians, spectators and officials are expected to follow the relevant Code of Conduct at all times.

### **Codes of Conduct:**

- [Player’s Code of Conduct](#)
- [Coach’s Code of Conduct](#)
- [Parent’s / Guardian’s / Spectator’s Code of Conduct](#)
- [Soccer Official’s Code of Conduct](#)

Zero Tolerance violations will be taken very seriously by SYSA and BAYS and will result in warnings, suspensions, or removal from Southborough Youth Soccer whenever deemed warranted by the SYSA Board of Directors. A Zero Tolerance subcommittee will review all incident reports and make disciplinary recommendations to the full Board.

Many referees are young and just starting their careers as soccer referees. There is a shortage of referees across youth sports! Without them, we can’t play. Please be respectful and support the referees, and report any Zero Tolerance violations to the SYSA Board.

### **BAYS Referee Abuse Policy**

[\*\*https://bays.org/content/referee-abuse-prevention-policy\*\*](https://bays.org/content/referee-abuse-prevention-policy)

All coaches, team managers, players, and spectators shall support and respect the directions and decisions made by the match officials before, during, and after the game. Failure to do so undermines the authority of the match officials and has the potential to create a hostile environment for the players, referees, and all other participants/spectators at a match. See [Match Rule 15](#).

The **Referee Abuse Prevention (RAP) Policy** applies to all coaches/team officials, players, parents, spectators, and other supporters and officials participating in a BAYS program or event.

- Only players are to speak to the match officials during and after the game.

- **Exceptions:**

Coaches may:

- Respond to an Official who has initiated a conversation
- Point out emergency or safety issues (referee retains the right to stop the game or not)
  - See BAYS [guideline on terminated and abandoned games](#)
  - For the purposes of this rule, arguing about calls or non-calls, especially regarding not calling fouls or aggressive play, does not fall under this emergency or safety issue exception and is not allowed.
- Alert the referee that there has been an incident of misconduct containing discriminatory, derogatory, or abusive language or behavior: Coach should say: **“Referee, Inappropriate Incident Report”**
- **Call for substitutions**
- Ask the Officials to clarify: type of restart/direction of throw-in or indirect vs. direct free kick
- Ask for the time remaining in the half

Absolutely **NO DISPUTING CALLS** during or after the game, no direct or indirect remarks to the referee to watch certain players or attend to rough play. Failure to follow the instructions of the match official, yelling, criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, or negative feedback of any kind before, during, or after the game will not be tolerated.

- Violators may be cautioned or sent-off and may be subject to disciplinary action by the RAP Review Committee. (See the Penalties Matrix, including Key Penalty Factors).

**After the Game:**

- If **Coaches** would like to provide feedback about the refereeing, **AFTER** the game, log into the BAYS site and under My BAYS->Coach/Manager->Game Feedback click the correct game link to access a form that will send the feedback directly to the home Referee Assignor as well as to BAYS officials.
- If **Spectators** have questions regarding particular calls, rules, or a referee, or wish to give feedback regarding a referee, they should contact their BAYS team

coach. Coaches can file feedback reports with BAYS or speak with their club officials to get more guidance.

To report a violation of the Language Incident or Discriminatory Act per MYSA policy: [Click Here](#)

The referee has the authority to take disciplinary action from the moment they arrive at the field of play for the pre-match inspection until leaving the field of play/parking area after the match ends.

If coaches or spectators have questions regarding particular calls, rules, or a referee, or wish to give feedback regarding a referee, please contact the town soccer club's referee coordinator for the game in question, or contact the BAYS Referees Representative at <http://www.bays.org>.

### **Disciplinary Process**

All reports of Zero Tolerance violations will be investigated by a member of a sportsmanship subcommittee of the Board. The subcommittee will be comprised of three members: (1) SYSA Vice President, (2) SYSA President; and (3) an additional Board member. In the event any of the members is unable to serve on the subcommittee, the open slot may be filled by another Board Member as appointed by the SYSA President. The purpose of the subcommittee is to review reports of violations and respond to relevant BAYS committees in a timely manner (generally within three business days). Subcommittee members may determine whether any action/disciplinary action is appropriate beyond the BAYS process. The Committee will consider, among other factors, (a) the severity of the incident; (b) whether the incident is a repeat offense, and (3) any sanctions/actions that may have been taken by BAYS independent of the SYSA Board Actions.

In general, SYSA will follow the disciplinary action imposed by BAYS. In addition, SYSA may invoke its own disciplinary process, which generally will follow a "card" system. The sportsmanship subcommittee will have the option of recommending additional discipline based upon the nature of the infraction (i.e., physical contact with a referee).

**Yellow Card:** A first offense will be assessed a Yellow Card. A Yellow card is a written warning to the offending party from the sportsmanship subcommittee that a report or complaint of a violation has been issued, and that future violations will result in additional action.

**Red Card:** A second offense will be assessed a Red Card. A Red Card will lead to an automatic suspension for one game. In the case of a coach violation, this suspension

will apply to all teams that the coach may be responsible for. During a suspension week, a suspended coach will be allowed to attend that team's game as a spectator only. If a spectator is assessed a red card, they will not be able to attend that team's game in any capacity.

The suspension will be served for the game immediately following the sportsmanship subcommittee assessment unless an appeal is filed (see below Appeal Process). If the appeal finding supports the original Red Card assessment, the suspension will be served in the game following that appeal finding. If no games are remaining in the season when the assessment is made, the game suspension will carry over to the following season in which that coach or spectator is a member of the SYSA program.

Any coach earning two Red Cards will be removed from the program as a coach for all age groups indefinitely, subject to appeal/reinstatement as noted below. Any spectator receiving two red cards will be removed from the sideline of all SYSA games indefinitely.

If a coach or spectator does not abide by the suspension, his/her child will be removed from the program. No refunds of fees will be offered.

### **Appeals Process**

Coaches or spectators who receive a Yellow Card are not entitled to an appeal. A coach or Spectator who receives a Red Card may request a meeting with the sportsmanship subcommittee to explain any extenuating circumstances. The sportsmanship subcommittee will strive to meet with the individual(s) within 7 days following notification of the Red Card at a mutually agreeable time and location. Appeals may also be heard by teleconference.

Within three days of hearing the Appeal, the sportsmanship subcommittee will make a recommendation to the SYSA Board to (a) enforce the sanction per the initial recommendation; or (b) modify the sanction. Once the SYSA Board has adopted the recommendation, the individual will be notified of the Board's decision by the Chair of the subcommittee.

An individual who has received multiple Red Cards and has been suspended indefinitely can apply for reinstatement after the equivalent of a full season has elapsed (i.e., 10 games). The individual should be prepared to explain how his/her behavior has changed and what steps he/she has taken to avoid future incidents. In the event a suspended individual is reinstated, any future violation of the RAP or Code of Conduct will result in permanent removal from the program (if a coach) and a sideline ban. Failure to adhere to the sanctions will result in removal of his/her child from the program.

