



Clarification of Abuse of an Official by Parents/Spectators Effective March 31, 2025

Abuse of Officials by parents/spectators has escalated to the point where it has become necessary for ASA to consider automatic suspensions when referees report feeling abused in any iteration of the descriptions below.

Should an official, as described in Section 1 (a) below, report abuse, an automatic suspension of three games will apply. Should hate speech as defined under ASA's Hate Speech Policy apply, the automatic suspension will be four games. In cases where the abuse is extreme, a hearing will take place to consider additional penalties.

Parental/spectator suspensions will normally take place in ASA sanctioned leagues. In situations where teams do not participate in ASA sanctioned leagues, the suspensions will be assigned to ASA sanctioned tournaments.

Section 1

- (a) When any person shall assault or abuse an official, jurisdiction shall vest immediately in the Board of Directors of this Association. An official, for the sole purpose of this specific ASA regulation, shall be defined as the referee, official linesperson, referee assignor(s), referee administrator, any non-licensed, non-registered person serving in an emergency capacity as a referee, any club assistant referee, player, coach, team administrator, tournament director(s), tournament staff, or any officer or member of the Board of Directors of this Association, member leagues and clubs. Misconduct towards officials may occur before, during and after the match, including travel to and from the match.
- (b) "Assault of an official" shall be defined as an intentional act of physical violence upon an official and shall include, but not be limited to, hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting at, or on, grabbing or bodily running into an official, kicking or throwing any object that could inflict injury, damaging an official's uniform or personal property, i.e., car, equipment, etc.
- (c) "Verbal Abuse of an official" shall be defined as a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact, which implies or threatens physical harm to an official or the official's property or equipment **or which is defined as hate speech under ASA's Hate Speech Policy.**
- (d) "Abuse of an official" shall be defined as, but not limited to, using foul or abusive language toward the official, threatening the official with remarks that carry implied or direct threat of physical harm, and spewing a beverage on an official or his property; or spitting at (but not on) the referee.

Section 2

A report of abuse of an official must be filed within 12 hours of the incident to **the SRA/SYRA and/or ASA** by the person witnessing the abuse **OR** by the person who is abused.

Where verbal abuse of an official during an ASA League match is committed by parents and/or spectators associated with a participating team, those parents and/or spectators will be restricted from attendance at a specified number of league games up to and including all remaining league games. In addition, the restriction may carry over to Cup play. Where the verbal abuse of an official is committed during a tournament game, the restriction may apply to league games and may carry over to Cup play. If the team involved is not participating in ASA leagues, the restriction will be applied to ASA sanctioned tournaments.

In the case of an under-age official, whether referee, player or any other official as defined in Section 1 (a), in addition to the 21-day suspension, a report **may** be filed with SafeSport and will be made available immediately to the appropriate authorities.

Again, in the case of an under-age official, whether referee, player or any other official as defined in Section 1 (a), the penalty MAY be increased by three (3) times per Bylaw 815, Section 3 (g).

Section 3

If it is determined that the reported abuse does not fall within the guidelines of the Safe Sport Act as referenced above, the normal procedures as outlined in the ASA Hearing Manual and Procedures, of which this policy will become part, shall be followed.

Section 4

Should law enforcement be called as a result of the assault/abuse of an official by parents/spectators, suspension will be immediate and no parents/spectators of the team involved will be permitted on the sidelines of any game for a period of 3 (three) months.