

FAQ on Sideline Responsibility:

What is the coach's responsibility?

The coach is there to manage the team and support the referee. The coach is there to make sure the players play hard and enjoy the game while accepting the referees' decisions. The coach can always file a referee report outlining their opinion of the referee's performance. The coach should never be confrontational. The coach is also there to manage the spectators and should encourage positive cheering for both teams and address negativity quickly and firmly.

What is the player's responsibility?

Play within the laws of the game and have fun. If they disagree with decisions, they should accept them and move on. If they cannot go on, the coach can remove the player(s) until they are in a proper mind. Players should always encourage their teammates, display good sportsmanship and appreciate the game.

What is the spectator's responsibility?

The coach does the coaching and the spectator's should enjoy the game and encourage positive play from both teams. Spectator actions can affect the outcome of the game and the players' enjoyment. Spectators should remember that they are guests and are not required to be part of a game.

How far can the disciplinary actions of ECYSA be taken?

The disciplinary actions of ECYSA regarding the coach, team or spectators can range from simple awareness warning to season suspensions or team point reductions. ECYSA can suspend a coach, player or spectator for one or more games. They can suspend for a season and require reinstatement with restrictions. Disciplinary points can be awarded to the team, which can demote a team in the standings. If the behavior is bad enough, legal action may result. Town organizations can also discipline coaches, players and spectators in addition to any ECYSA sanctions per their organizational rules.

What can result from non-supportive or unsporting sideline behavior of a coach or coaching staff?

If the referee feels that the behavior of a coach is inappropriate he can perform an ask, tell, dismiss three-step approach to the coach's behavior. This would include any behavior or actions that are not supportive of the referee. Examples include; questioning calls, making loud disparaging remarks or gestures, instructing his/her players to perform unsporting behavior, remarking negatively on the opposing players .

If the referee feels the behavior is serious enough in one action, he can dismiss the coach (or coaching staff) without "asking" or "telling" or as a more severe measure – abandon the game which in turn results in a forfeit.

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What can result from non-supportive or unsporting behavior of the spectators?

If spectators are using non-encouraging language or actions with respect to the referee or any of the players, coaches or opposing parents, the referee should “ask” the coach or both team coaches to address the situation. If the situation persists, the referee may abandon the match or may “tell” the coaches to remove a spectator, a group of spectators or the complete sideline. If the sideline does not remove from the field, the referee will abandon the match.

The result of the game will be determined by ECYSA and could result in a forfeit, a double forfeit, disciplinary points deducted from the standings, coach suspension or further actions and sanctions.

What if the referee is wrong in his decision or actions?

The Laws of the Game are applied *in the opinion of the referee*, not the coaches, players or spectators. If a coach feels that the referee’s actions were inappropriate, the coach should file a referee report and an ECYSA Commissioner and Referee Assignor will determine what action will be taken. It is unacceptable for a coach or spectator to confront a referee in any manner before, during or after the game. Remember one day that young referee could be your child, how would you feel if coaches were confrontational?

What if there is a player safety concern regarding the referees’ actions?

A coach or spectator has the right to inform the referee if a player is hurt on the field. If the coach feels the game is too rough or that the manner in which the referee is calling a game will result in injuries, at half time the coach may speak to the referee in a non-threatening manner if the referee agrees to speak to the coach . If the game continues to be a safety concern, that coach has the right to pull the team from the field. The coach should also file a game report detailing the items that resulted in the concern for the player’s safety. A spectator can indicate an injured player to the referee, but must go through their coach if they feel the game is unsafe. They must not confront the referee. It is always an option for a parent to remove their child from the game.

Doesn’t this seem unfair giving the referee subjective authority at the field?

The game and laws are written for the referee to provide a fair game. The laws state that the game shall be played “in the opinion of the referee” not the coach or the spectators. Essentially the referee does have subjective authority at the field. It is important to remember that referees can and will make calls or non-calls that others disagree with, just as players and coaches make plays and decisions others may have handled differently. In all cases, differing opinions are fine to hold, it is how they are expressed that becomes a matter of concern.