



STATEMENT ON PREVENTING REFEREE ABUSE

Starting with the 2016 summer season, the Merrill Soccer Association will initiate a pro-active campaign to counteract abuse of referees by coaches, players, and spectators. This action is taken to continue to ensure the league maintains an adequate number of qualified officials to referee soccer games and provide a positive experience for those working as referees.

The Merrill Soccer Association's position is that youth sports are about participation and positive experiences playing and officiating soccer games. The Merrill Soccer Association has a ZERO tolerance stance regarding referee abuse and is committed to backing officials 100%.

The Merrill Soccer Association considers referee abuse to be comments/actions from coaches, players, or spectators that include the following three elements:

PERSONAL: "Hey Referee, sir, ma'am, gesturing toward/at officials, etc. The comment/action is clearly directed at the referee or assistant referees.

PUBLIC: The statement/action is meant to be heard or seen by others.

PROVOCATIVE: Derogatory comments or gestures directed at the referee's or assistant referee's abilities, appearance, etc. such as "Call it both ways" or "How could you miss that tripping foul?"

All Merrill Soccer Association coaches will communicate to parents and players that no coaches, players, or spectators will abuse game officials.

Merrill Soccer Association coaches will assist referees in stopping abuse coming from spectators by talking to those spectators if needed, and always if requested to do so by the referee. The coach will also assist in ensuring that spectators ejected from watching the game by the referee have left the area.

Parents watching soccer games will take the initiative to communicate with other spectators if they observe referee abuse occurring. If the abuse continues, or the parent has concerns about talking to the abuser, the parent will communicate the information to the coach at the next available opportunity. The coach will communicate with the offender or provide the information to the Merrill Soccer Association board (merrillsoccer@gmail.com).

Merrill Soccer Association
Board of Directors
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