

The 2008 fall soccer season saw several instances of “touchline misconduct” violations toward game officials both volunteer and certified. The purpose of this correspondence is to provide clarification of not only touchline misconduct, but coaching/sideline conduct regulations and to describe the Wenatchee Valley Youth Soccer Association’s (WVYSA) position regarding such violations.

The WVYSA was formed for the purpose of promoting youth soccer in the greater Wenatchee Valley. As a member organization of the Washington State Youth Soccer Association (WSYSA) the WVYSA has adopted the rules and regulations of the WSYSA. Those rules and regulations outline not only administrative procedures, but dictate game play rules as well as conduct rules of all youth soccer participants to include administrators, coaches, players, and spectators.

WSYSA Rule 214.3 Touchline Misconduct as well as **WSYSA Rule 305.11 Coaching/Sideline Conduct** governs conduct before, during, and after all WVYSA sanctioned events. Violations of these rules will not be tolerated.

214.3 Touchline Misconduct

“Touchline Misconduct” is a verbal statement or action that impedes, distracts, interferes or delays in any manner a referee (including assistant referees or fourth officials) from the duties of his/her game management. Such misconduct may occur before, during and after a match, including travel to and from the match. Misconduct may occur at later times when directly related to the duties or actions of a referee. Touchline Misconduct is not restricted to actions at the touchline or a match. Touchline Misconduct does not include written reports or comments to a referee assignor or other supervisory personnel.

Penalties for Touchline Misconduct may include a suspension or ban for one game up to five games. The suspended games are not necessarily to be served within the competition, but within any WSYSA sanctioned event. The game suspension definition will be determined by the hearing authority. In unusual circumstances or with repeat offenders, a suspension or ban may be increased up to six months. Alternative or additional sanctions may include proof of successful completion of referee certification course and/or anger management courses, and/or similar type training.

305.11 Coaching/Sideline Conduct

(a) Coaching from the sidelines – giving direction to one’s own team on points of strategy and position – is permitted, provided:

(1) Neither mechanical or electronic devices are used;

(2) The tone of voice is informative and not a harangue.

(b) All coaches, substitute players and other bench personnel are to remain within the “coaching area” (two yards behind the touch line, and not within eighteen yards of the goal line).

(c) No player, coach, substitute player or other bench personnel are to make derogatory remarks or gestures to the referees, other players, substitutes, or spectators.

(d) No player, coach, substitute player or other bench person is to use profanity.

(e) No player, coach, substitute player or other bench person is to incite, in any manner, or engage in any kind of disruptive behavior.

(f) If the above rules are violated, the referee shall ask the offending party for compliance with the rules. The referee may file a written incident report to the WSYSA office, attn: WSYSA Disciplinary Committee.

(g) In the event that compliance is not received from the offending party, the referee shall ask the offending party to leave the playing area. If this request is made, the referee

must file a written incident report to the WSYSA office, attn: WSYSA Disciplinary Committee.

(h) If the offending party refuses to leave the playing area, or returns after leaving, the referee shall abandon the match and file a written report of the game abandonment with the WSYSA office, attn: WSYSA Disciplinary Committee.

(i) It shall be the responsibility of each team to maintain proper spectator conduct. Each coach, manager and team, club or league official shall be held primarily accountable for the conduct of the spectators for or from their respective teams. At no time shall foul or abusive language be permitted at any field.

The WVYSA has instituted a “zero tolerance” policy with regards to violations of the above listed rules. Any administrator, coach, player, or spectator who is found to have engaged in Touchline Misconduct will be subject to the aforementioned sanctions and may be required to attend a hearing before the WSYSA Disciplinary Committee in Olympia.

Coaches who fail to take control of sideline offenders, or who themselves violate the Coaching/Sideline Conduct rules will face sanctions imposed by WVYSA and may forfeit their teams ability to continue participation, whole or in part, in any and all WVYSA sanctioned events for the remainder of the scheduled season.

The WVYSA encourages coaches, players, and spectators to practice sportsmanship, and promote a healthy recreational environment for all of its members. The zero tolerance policy is designed to protect the game of soccer and its participants. This policy will be in effect for the 2009-10 season.