



WISCONSIN YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

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Referee Registration & Protocol

The Spring 2021 season is underway! Hundreds of games occupied fields around Wisconsin last weekend, with even more scheduled in the weeks ahead. Signs of our full return are more and more promising with relaxed requirements and an uptick in player registrations this spring. From grassroots to professional, the excitement for spring soccer is with us all. With this excitement, there is also a call for action.

Pre-COVID, all sports including youth soccer began to see a decline in the number of available referees. The pandemic, combined with condensed and overlapping schedules this spring has exacerbated the issue. Referee certification is ongoing in Wisconsin and requires your attention. Do you know someone who was a referee, but did not re-certify? Encourage them to do so! Are there perspective referees in your organization you can support through the WYSA [Referee Mentorship and Retention Initiative](#)? Get them involved! Referees are integral to the thousands of competitions scheduled each season. Identification of new referees is a local initiative, and we need your help! See <http://wisref.org> for registration information.

While the pandemic has affected our referee pool, we also know the referee shortage is not only a product of COVID-19, but the environment youth sports sometimes create for referees. All participants – coaches, players and spectators have a duty to comply with [WYSA's Zero Tolerance Policy](#). The purpose of this policy is to make clear that verbal abuse or negative criticism of referees is as unacceptable as verbal abuse or negative criticism of players. Is your club familiar with this Policy? Have your coaches, players and parents been educated about [Acceptable Sideline Behavior](#)? Please share these documents with your members and reiterate the importance of appropriate conduct on and off the field.

Important Notes

- Coaches are responsible for ensuring all spectators associated with his/her team follow these guidelines.
- A coach or spectator may only communicate in a positive way with a referee.
- A coach/spectator may not express any disagreement or dissatisfaction with the officiating to a youth referee.
- A coach/spectator may not, before, during, or after a game, discuss with a referee their critique of the referee's performance, other than to thank and compliment the referee.
- Any concerns or feedback regarding referees must be submitted in writing to the Competition Administrator. (Concerns related to referee performance or behavior will only be accepted from a Club Official (i.e., board member), Director of Coaching or the team's coach. The claim must provide details specific to the complaint and cite examples where referee performance or behavior was inadequate or improper.)

April 30, 2021