



NorCal Premier Soccer Leaders, Coaches, Volunteers, Parents & Players,

This past week, US Club Soccer hosted a meeting with the leaders of their affiliated leagues from across the country to address the referee shortage. During the opening remarks, outgoing US Club Chairman Mike Cullina addressed the feedback many referee assignors have received from referees who decided to not return to refereeing because of the abuse they receive from coaches and parents.

After listening to him speak, I searched in our NorCal sportsmanship file and I came across a letter to our membership, from the Norcal Board, with some of the excerpts I thought remain especially relevant today:

*“We know soccer is a game which sees referees, coaches, and players making errors on a pretty regular basis. It is a part of the game. Recognizing the inevitability of mistakes, it is vital the adults, the referees, coaches, and parents, provide the players a positive example of how to behave properly within this competitive cauldron – within and around the game.*

*Referees must be respected and treated properly for without them our games cannot be played. Remember they are sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, grandmothers and grandfathers. They are our fellow soccer fans and they deserve our patience. Our praise, respect, and admiration should be shown to them for taking on what is often a thankless task.*

*While we absolutely encourage everyone to give their best effort trying to win, we also believe a sense of soccer fellowship should be maintained at all times, among opponents, opposing fans, and referees. Treat each other with courtesy, remember your opponents are, like you, fans of the game only in a different uniform, playing for a different club, supporting a different team, or in the case of referees, with a different role to play.*

*Whatever part you play, be a role model. Set an example. Your positive example is incredibly valuable to those youngsters who witness it!”*

I watch a lot of soccer - youth, college, and professional.

Alongside a lot of good coaching, I see a lot of poor coaching. Alongside a lot of good refereeing, I see a lot of poor refereeing. Alongside a lot of good soccer parenting, I see a lot of poor soccer parenting.

Imagine last weekend if, as I watched games, I began berating the coach who arrived late, had a very poor warm-up and then exhibited poor coaching. Imagine if I screamed, “Coach, your warm-up sucked,



at least pump up your balls, do you even know the game because that was a horrible coaching point, and get off your phone!”.

Imagine if I yelled at the father who made a ridiculous coaching point to his son, “John that was a stupid point, you know nothing about the game!”

I would be considered crazy.

Yet, all referees have probably experienced this sort of abuse during their refereeing career from coaches and parents.

This has to stop!

Most coaches and parents behave properly, keep the game in perspective, sit back, and enjoy their children competing on the field.

Kudos to those folks!

Those who cannot control themselves on the sidelines of a youth soccer game are asked to stay home and leave the beautiful game to those who can! Finally, those who lose control of themselves, coaches, and parents, who are ejected from the sidelines, have their case reviewed by the PAD and receive suspensions - please see our current policy below.

Thanks,

Benjamin Ziemer  
President  
NorCal Premier Soccer

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**NorCal Policy - Response to Incidents of a Violent Nature at NorCal Games**

*Clubs and coaches are responsible for the actions of their players & supporters at any and all NorCal Premier Soccer games/events at which they participate. Poor behavior from spectators can result in a suspension for coaches and/or teams from NorCal competitions, or suspensions for all the team’s supporters from attending NorCal competitions. Any incident of a violent nature or abuse towards officials will result in a PAD hearing, and will likely be referred to the NorCal Board of Directors for further action, which can include a review of the club’s NorCal membership.*