



INFORMATION BULLETIN

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To: Ontario Soccer; District Membership and Associate Members
CC: Ontario Soccer Board of Directors and Staff
From: Matt Ferreira, Chief Technical Officer

Subject: Province-Wide Implementation of Take5 Initiative in all 5v5 & 7v7 Matches

Ontario Soccer is pleased to announce the province-wide implementation of Take 5, an initiative introduced under the *#NoRefNoGame* program and designed to address spectator behaviour to create a safer, more supportive environment for Match Officials in grassroots, small-sided games. After engagement with the Ontario Soccer's Board of Directors and the Match Officials Development Committee, this initiative will be implemented across Ontario to support the retention of Match Officials.

All information about the project and associated resources have been made available [online here](#).

Why Take5 is Important?

This initiative represents a continued commitment to supporting Match Officials and building a culture of collaboration between referees and Team Officials. By doing so, this project and culture shift ensures a positive, safe, and supportive soccer experience for all participants across Ontario. The Take5 initiative will foster respectful sideline behaviour and improve the understanding of the important role Match Officials play – as facilitators of competition – in the broader development of soccer in the province.

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What is Take5?

Take 5 follows a three-phase process when spectator behaviour crosses the acceptable threshold:

Phase 1 – The Warning

- Match Official pauses the game and instructs the Team Official to manage their sideline on the first occurrence of negative spectator behaviour.

Phase 2 – The 5-Minute Timeout

- After another incident of negative spectator behaviour, the Match Official implements a 5-minute timeout.

Phase 3 – Game Abandonment

- If negative behaviour persists, the Match Official abandons the game, walks off, and submits the required documentation.

Match Officials must submit a reporting form if Phases 1 or 2 are used while both the reporting form plus a Special Incident Report must be submitted if a game is abandoned (Phase 3).

What did the Pilot Project tell us?

Take5 was piloted during the 2025 season and focused on bringing awareness to the impact of spectator behaviour at the grassroots level. Survey data from the pilot showed:

- 90% of Match Officials felt safer with Take 5 in place
- 94% of participants indicated they would continue refereeing

Where Take5 Applies and How it Works

Take5 may be used province-wide in grassroots small-sided matches:

- Age groups of Under8 to Under-11
- 5v5 and 7v7 formats

Please note: Take5 should not be implemented in any age group Under-12 and older (specifically in 9v9 or 11v11 playing formats). Additionally, this initiative only applies to spectator behaviour and is not intended to manage Team Officials.

For questions regarding the Take5 implementation or reporting, please contact the Ontario Soccer's Officiating Team at matchofficials@ontariosoccer.net.

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