

NYSA 3rd/4th Grade Division (u10) Recreation Soccer Game Rules

Game Format

A size four ball will be used. Goals are 6' tall x 18' wide.

Unless changed by the league due to roster size or other such reason, each team will play with nine players on the field including the goalie i.e. 8 field players plus 1 goalie. Goalie must wear a bib/pinnie or other jersey that is of a different color from the opposing team's field players.

Substitutions can occur at any stoppage in play and are unlimited for both teams. Substitutions will be permitted with the center referee's permission and at the referee's discretion. Substitutes must enter at the center line; and must be ready (i.e. standing at the center line) when the substitution is called for. The substitute may not enter the field until the referee calls them on. The player being subbed for should ideally leave the field at the closest point to maximize time that the ball is in play.

Playing Time: Each player must play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. (Referees do not enforce this rule. If necessary, coaches should remind each other of this rule at halftime.)

The Duration of the Match: The match is divided into two 25-minute-long halves. Half time is 5 minutes long. Regular season games can end in ties. There are no overtime periods. No allowance is made for time lost through a period. However, if the referee believes one team is deliberately wasting time, he can deny substitutions by that team and/or issue yellow cards for delay of restart. Also, the referee will enforce the six second rule on the goalkeeper, taking into consideration that 3rd and 4th graders are still learning the rules of soccer.

Offside offences will be called.

Fouls and misconduct will be called, and result in either a direct free kick or an indirect free kick. Misconduct can and usually will result in a yellow or red card, depending on the nature of the misconduct and the player or coach's attitude toward the referee and the opposing player(s)/coaches after the misconduct occurs.

Penalty kicks: A foul on the defending team inside the penalty area will result in a penalty kick. Some infringements by the defending team inside the penalty area call for an indirect kick, such as a deliberate back pass to the goalkeeper that the goalkeeper touches with his hands inside the penalty area.



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Scoring: Any time the ball completely crosses the end-line inside the goal, the attacking team is awarded a goal. The entire circumference of the ball must completely go over the entire line to count as a goal. Coaches and players must understand that if there is a close decision on a goal scored, the referee will do his best under the circumstances, especially if there is no AR on that side of the field.

Basic Offside Rules

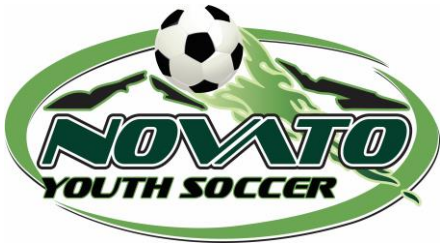
A player is in offside position if any part of their head, body or feet is in the opponent's half of the field and any part of their head, body or feet is nearer to the opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last defender at the moment that the ball is played AND the player in an offside position either interferes with play by touching the ball, interferes with an opponent, or gains an advantage.

In other words, a player is in an offside position when they are nearer to the goal line than the second to the last defender OR the ball. AND, they are guilty of offside when the ball is deliberately played or touched by a teammate and the attacker participates in play. Participating in play is defined as follows: (1) Interfering with play: making a motion or action to play the ball; (2) Interfering with an opponent: making a motion or action towards the ball or effecting the ability of the opponent to play the ball; or (3) Gaining an advantage: plays the ball from a shot on goal or deflection. In other words, it is not an offense just to be in the offside position.

A player in an offside position receiving the ball from or off an opponent (i.e. defender on other team) who deliberately plays the ball is not considered to have a gained advantage, and in this case, an offside offence is not called. A deliberate play on the ball by a defender includes when the defender does not play the ball well, such as "shanking" the ball off the side of his boot.

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from either a goal kick, a throw-in, or a corner kick; or if they receive the ball on their own half of the field.

If an offside offence occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick where the offence occurred.



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The Start & Restart of Play

Kick-Off: Each half will begin with a kick-off at midfield. The team taking the opening kickoff will be determined by pregame coin flip. The team that does not take the opening kickoff will take the kickoff to start the second half. After a goal, play will restart with a kick off by the team that was scored upon.

During a kickoff, all players must be in their half of the field of play. The opponents of the team taking the kickoff must remain outside the center circle, until the ball is played. The ball must be stationary at the center mark. The referee gives the signal, and the ball is in play when the ball is kicked and moves. The first kick can either move the ball the ball in any direction, including backwards back into the half of the team taking the kick-off. A goal may be scored directly from the kick-off.

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again before it has touched another player, a free kick is awarded to the opposing team where the infringement occurred.

Throw-Ins: Anytime the entire circumference of the ball fully crosses the entire side line, play will restart with a throw-in. The last team to touch the ball in-bounds will lose possession, and the opposing team will take the throw-in. Throw-ins will be taken where the ball left the field of play. During a throw-in, the player will throw the ball using two hands straight over their head, and both feet will remain on the ground and out of bounds until the throw is complete. Opposing players defending a throw-in must be at least two yards away from the ball and otherwise not unfairly interfere with the ball being thrown into the field. If the ball is properly thrown but does not enter the field of play, then the player throwing the ball gets to throw it again from the same spot. At the 3rd/4th grade level, referees are instructed to also educate players on proper procedures so some referees may give players a second chance if the ball was illegally thrown; this is acceptable as long as it is equally applied to both teams.

Corner Kicks: Any time the defending team kicks the ball completely over the end-line outside the goal, the attacking team will restart play with a corner kick. A corner kick is a direct kick, meaning a player can score on a corner kick without the ball being touched by another player prior to entering the goal.

Goal Kicks: Any time the attacking team kicks the ball completely over the end-line outside the goal, the defending team will restart play with a goal kick. In our 3rd/4th grade division league, the ball will be placed on the "18-yard box" line for the restart.



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Free Kicks: The referee will determine if free kicks are either direct or indirect, depending on the reason for which the referee awarded the free kick pursuant to the Laws of the Game. At the referee's direction, players must be at least 10 yards from the ball until it is in play. The kicking team may execute a quick kick restart of play, without a whistle. But if the kicking team asks for 10 yards, then the kicking team must wait for the whistle of the referee, which he or she will blow after he or she has guided the opposing team to a distance of 10 yards from the placement of the kick.

Drop Ball Restart: A drop ball restart can happen when there is an injury during the run of play (or other incident, such as a dog running onto the field after the ball, etc.) and the referee blows the whistle to stop play. To resume play, and follow the drop ball rules, the referee drops the ball to a player on the team that last touched the ball prior to the referee blowing their whistle. The referee drops the ball at the position where it last touched a player. All the other players must remain 4.5 yards away from the player receiving the ball when the referee drops the ball. The ball is considered in play immediately when it touches the ground.

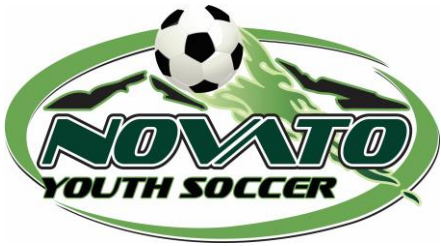
However, when the whistle is blown for an injury inside the penalty box, or the 18-yard box, for a player that was not fouled, then the goalkeeper in that box is the one to receive the drop ball soccer restart. It does not matter which team had the player that last touched the ball when it is inside the penalty box.

The drop ball restart is an indirect restart, in that, after the player receiving the drop ball touches the ball, the ball must touch at least one other player before going into the goal for the goal to stand.

Fouls and Misconduct

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless, or using excessive force:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges at an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles an opponent
- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately



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The direct free kick is taken from the place where the offense occurred. A direct kick means the player taking the free kick can score without the ball touching another player prior to going into the goal.

A penalty kick is a type of direct free kick. A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above offenses is committed by a player inside his or her own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

Essentially, direct free kicks are awarded on all contact fouls and handballs.

An indirect kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his or her own penalty area, commits any of the following offenses:

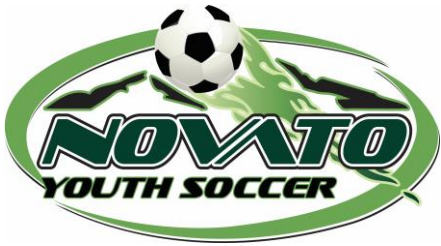
- Touches the ball again with his or her hands after releasing it but before it touches another player
- Touches the ball with his or her hands after it has been deliberately kicked or passed to him or her by a teammate

Goalies are encouraged to play the ball with reasonable pace when they have possession of the ball in their hands. The Laws of the Game state that goalies must not control the ball with their hands for more than six seconds before releasing it from their possession. In the 3rd/4th grade division, referees at their discretion may be lenient with calling this offense. However, if a referee determines that a goalie is purposefully stalling by waiting too long to release the ball, the referee may award an indirect free kick inside the box in this situation.

An indirect free kick is also to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referee, a player:

- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his or her hands
- Commits any other offense, not previously mentioned, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player

For the most part, indirect free kicks are awarded for all non-contact infractions and violations such as (1) offside; (2) double touch by same player on any restart; (3) goalie picking up the ball after it has been passed by a teammate; (4) goalie picking up a the ball after a throw in from a teammate; (5) attacker preventing the goalie from releasing the ball; and (5) playing in a dangerous manner.



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Indirect free kicks need two touches from two different players on either team to score.

The yellow card is used to communicate that a coach, player or substitute has been cautioned. A player is cautioned and shown a yellow card if he or she commits any of the following offenses:

- Unsporting behavior
- Dissent by word or action
- Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game
- Delaying the restart of play
- Failure to respect the required distance when play is restarted
- Entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission
- Deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission

The red card is used to communicate that a coach, player or substitute has been sent off. A player is sent off and shown the red card if he or she commits any of the following offenses:

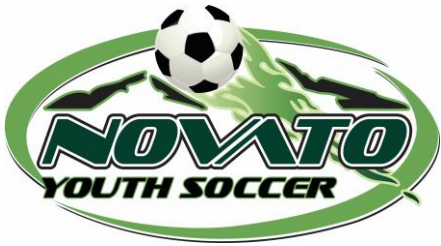
- Serious foul play
- Violent conduct
- Spitting at an opponent or any other person
- Denying the opposing team a goal or obvious goal scoring chance by deliberately handling the ball
- Denying the opposing team, a goal or obvious goal scoring chance by an offense punishable by a free kick
- Using offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures
- Receiving a second caution in the same match

A player, substitute or coach who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and technical area. The team of the player sent off must play a player down for the remainder of the match.

Free Kicks

Free kicks are either direct or indirect.

If a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, a goal is awarded.



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The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising his or her arm above his or her head. He or she maintains his or her arm in that position until the kick has been taken and the ball has touched another player or goes out of play.

On an indirect kick, a goal can only be scored if the ball touches another player (on either team including the goalie) before it enters the goal. If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, a goal kick is awarded. If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the kicking team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the other team.

For both direct and indirect free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken. All opponents must remain six yards from the ball until it is in play (at the request of the kicking team). The ball is in play the moment it is kicked and moves. The free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

If, when a kick is taken and the kicking team has asked for clearance to an opponent prior to the kick, any opponent who is closer to the ball than the required distance will cause the kick to be retaken.

If, after the ball is in play on an indirect kick, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team where the infringement occurred.

The Penalty Kick

A penalty kick is awarded against a team which commits a "direct free kick offense" inside its own penalty area while the ball is in play.

A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

The ball must be placed on a penalty mark, or walked off by the referee and placed at a spot at their discretion. The player taking the penalty kick must be identified. The defending goalie must remain on his or her line until the ball has been kicked.

The players other than the kicker and goalkeeper must be located inside the field of play & outside the penalty area.

After the players have taken positions, the referee signals for the penalty kick to be taken. The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward. He or she must not touch it again until it touches another player. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.



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As soon as the ball is in play, any player on the field may enter the penalty area to make a defensive or attacking play on the ball.

If the goalie blocks the penalty kick, and the ball remains in the field of play, any player may make a play on the ball, including the penalty kick taker, who can follow up their shot.

Referee(s)

For the third/fourth grade recreation soccer league, a club certified referee will be used. The referee has the full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game, as well as rules specific to NYSA's 3rd/4th grade league, in the match that he or she has been appointed.

The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether a goal is scored, are final. The referee may only change a decision on realizing that it is incorrect, or, at his or her discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee, provided that he or she has not restarted play or terminated the match.

At a minimum, a solo referee will call matches for this division. In some cases, one or two assistant referees may be appointed to assist the referee to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

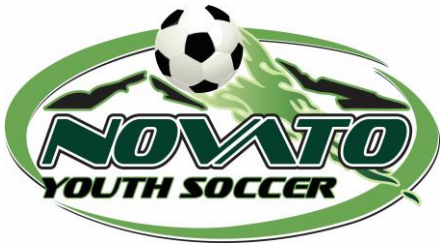
Furthermore, as the 3rd/4th grade division is a development league for our players, so is it a development league for our local referee corp. It should be understood that in many cases, the referees assigned to the games in this league are first time referees, learning how to call games & still learning all the rules of the game. It is critical that coaches, players and spectators provide a positive environment so that these referees can grow in their confidence to call games, and continue as referees so that our kids can have this opportunity.

Dress Code

A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous both to themselves or another player. The referee will decide what is dangerous.

All players must wear shin guards. Shin guards must be covered by socks.

Shoes with non-soccer cleats are not permitted. For example, lacrosse and baseball cleats, and some football cleats, are not safe/approved for soccer and will not be allowed.



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No jewelry will be permitted. Nothing metallic may be worn & nothing may be worn on the wrists. Earrings are not allowable. Earrings and other jewelry may not be taped over; however, a player that has a medical condition for which he/she wears a Medi-alert bracelet or necklace may wear that item as long it is properly secured by tape to the arm/wrist, etc.

Goalkeepers should wear a jersey or pinnie that is a different color from either team jersey.

Playing with a cast is not permitted.

Special Explanation of Certain Rules & Guidelines

Heading the Ball – heading the ball is not permitted at the 3rd/4th grade division. If a player heads the ball intentionally, the resulting call will be an indirect free kick for the opposing team. If the ball accidentally hits a player in the head, there is no infringement; however, the referee should observe the player for possible injury in this situation and stop play for a drop ball if the player hit by the ball needs to be evaluated or removed from the game.

Advantage Rule – The advantage rule is originally unique to soccer, whereby the referee has the responsibility to NOT call an obvious foul if, by stopping play at that moment, the effect would be to cause greater harm to the team that was fouled. If the team that committed the foul would receive an advantage from a stoppage in play, the official is permitted to disregard the foul and let the game continue. This helps to not punish the team that was fouled.

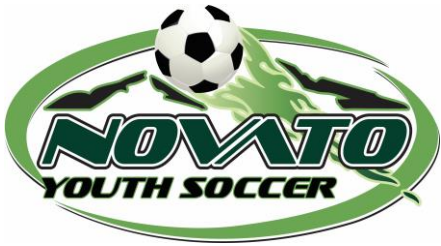
The referee will make the hand signal for advantage and may yell “Play on!” to indicate to the players to not stop play. This means that when official signals advantage play (which is done with one or both arms out horizontally in front of him or her) the game should not stop as long as the fouled team is in possession of the ball.

An advantage cancels out a foul play and the game continues as normal. However, the referee can also recall the foul if the fouled team immediately loses their advantage.

The advantage is to last only a few seconds, or until the fouled player successfully passes the ball to another member of their team.

Handballs – Handballs are direct free kick offences called when a field player deliberately handles the ball. Handball is a foul by which a player’s hand or arm deliberately touches the ball.

The word “deliberate” is key.



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If the ball is moving at a fast pace and a player is unable to move their arm/hand out of the way of the ball, it is not a handball. This can happen when a player kicks the ball and it hits another player's hand/arm, or when the ball bounces off a player's own body part and it hits them in the hand/arm.

In order for it to be called as a handball, the player whose arm/hand was hit by the ball needs to have deliberately tried to "handle" the ball or made themselves bigger by stretching out their arms.

One exception is handballs that occur accidentally will be penalized if the ball (1) hits the attacker's hand/arm and goes directly into the opponent's goal or (2) hits the attacker's hand/arm and then he shoots and scores in the opponent's goal.

Also, if a goalie picks up the ball outside of the 18-yard box, then that will be considered a handball offence

Coach and Spectator Restrictions on Positioning around the Field

Only coaches can be on the player side of the field, unless a parent/guardian is attending to an injured child.

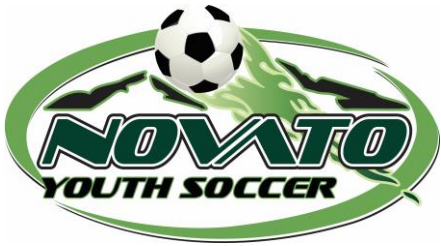
Coaches may only be on their half of the field on the coaching side. They may not cross the midline. If there is an AR on that side of the field, the coaches must stay out of his/her way and allow him/her to have a proper view down the entire sideline.

Parents/spectators are only allowed on the spectator side of the field. No parents or coaches are allowed on the end-lines.

Build From the Back Rules Mandate

US Club Soccer, the governing body for the NYSA Fall Recreation League, has issued a continued mandate for the upcoming season relating to enhanced player safety and a better quality of play. These are the same rules that we played with starting in 2018. As with all new mandates, NYSA has interpreted these new policies to ensure that our players remain safe, while having a great time participating with their teammates on the soccer field.

The most important interpretation of the new rules is that when either the goalie has the ball or during goal kick situations, the team without the ball must immediately begin retreating back to their own side of the centerline. The team without the ball is now the "defending" team.



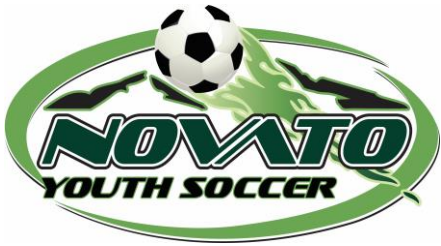
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Once the defending team is on their own side of the centerline, the “defending” team cannot go over the centerline to “try to win the ball back” until either the goalie distributes the ball, or the goal kick is taken.

Furthermore, the goalie or the player taking the goal kick has the option of “playing quickly”, i.e. distributing the ball or taking the goal kick before the “defending” team has fully retreated to its own side of the centerline. In this case, the “defending” team does not need to continue moving to its own side of the centerline, but can immediately begin pressuring the ball to gain possession.

As these new mandates change the way the game has been played at the younger ages, NYSA has worked to clearly explain and identify the newly created policies below.

- US Club Soccer has mandated that starting this season, a goalkeeper will no longer “punt” or “kick” the soccer ball in the air once the goalkeeper has received the ball and picked it up.
- When the goalkeeper has gained possession of the ball, the opposing team must retreat beyond the center line to the side of the field they are defending.
- At the goalie’s discretion, the goalkeeper may wait for the opposing team to retreat beyond the center line, and then the goalkeeper can roll or throw the ball to one of his teammates so that they may start play. The goalie is also permitted to put the ball on the ground and either pass the ball to a teammate or even dribble.
- The goalkeeper may play quickly at their own discretion, before all of the opposing team has retreated behind the center line, however the ball must be rolled or thrown to his or her own teammate rather than kicked.
- If the goalkeeper “punts” or “kicks” the ball, the referee shall stop play, and the goalkeeper will be given a second opportunity to start play by rolling the ball to his or her teammates following the opponent’s retreating behind the center line.
- The opposing team can begin attacking as soon as the goalie has put the ball in play.
- The opposing team should retreat behind the center line quickly to ensure that the pace of play is maintained at a reasonable level. Coaches shall not delay their team’s retreat as a stall or time-wasting tactic, and the referee or coach referee at his or her discretion may add additional time if he or she feels that the retreating team’s coach is stalling.
- During a goal kick, the opposing team shall retreat behind the center line. The team taking the goal kick shall place the ball at the top of the goalie box (a.k.a. 18-yard box). It is intended that the player taking the kick shall start play by passing the ball to his or her teammate.



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- Heading the ball is not allowed, and youth soccer players should not be coached in trainings or games to head the ball.
- At the referee's (or coach-referee's or club official's discretion), he or she may stop play and issue an in-direct free kick to the opposing team, if a player heads the ball, or uses his or her head to direct, or re-direct the soccer ball.

For 3rd/4th grade divisions, the referees (or coach-referees or club officials) will for the most part implement these new rules, but please continue to direct your players during the game back towards the centerline when the opposing goalie has the ball or on a goal kick. This will especially help with pace of play.

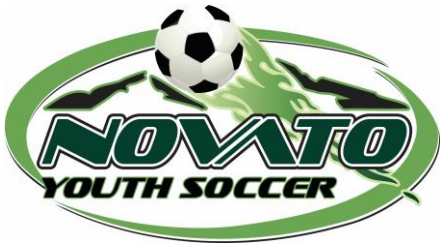
A NOTE ABOUT RESPECTING REFS

RESPECT THE REFS

Player's play, coaches coach, referees officiate, fans support.

A soccer referee, by definition, is an authority who supervises and governs the play of a match to ensure safety and fairness in accordance with the Laws of the Game. Referees are asked to make neutral, split second decisions based on what they see in the midst of a competitive environment, full of biased influences, and deceivers. The FIFA Laws of the Game, more so than other sports, are prone to subjection because of the word "discretion", which appears five times in the Laws of the Game. Discretion is defined as the freedom to decide what should be done in a particular situation, and the FIFA Laws of the Game bequeaths referees the freedom to make decisions based on their perspective, understanding, and judgement. The word "discretion" creates a lot of gray area in a rule book that would otherwise be very black and white, and prone to less subjection from players, coaches, and fans. It is our beautiful game, and discretion of referees is an element of that beauty.

With elements of perspective, understanding, judgment, and discretion in a competitively biased environment, the quality of referee performance is subject to all those variables. Too often, players, coaches, and fans expect officiating robots, flawless decision makers. What should be expected are differences of perspective, understanding, judgment, discretion, and competitive bias. It should be expected that referees will make mistakes. Yes, go into each game expecting the referees will make mistakes, because they will just as the players will. When faced with 10 split second decisions in a game, players will make mistakes in technical and tactical execution and players, coaches, and fans (for the most part) are accepting that player's split-second decisions will not be 10 out of 10. Why is our standard for 10 split second decisions by referees any different?



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When it comes to youth soccer especially, we need players, coaches, and fans to offer more leniency, understanding, and respect for referees. Professional players play in professional games officiated by professional referees. Developing youth players, play in youth games officiated by developing referees. Verbal and physical dissent of referee decisions is disrespectful, unacceptable behavior, and offers no positive rewards. Players, coaches, and fans should be more concerned with what they can control than what they cannot control. We cannot control referee decisions but we can control our ability to respect, cope, and play through decisions of the referee.

In an effort to further support our club's mission, NYSA does not permit verbal or physical dissent towards referees by our players, coaches, and fans. We believe the playing environment is the most crucial component of our player development philosophy and referee dissent of any kind has a negative impact on the playing environment and player development. Please help better NYSA this season by making a conscious effort to '**Respect the Refs**'!