

To all referees who officiate CMSA games,

CMSA is quite alarmed at the number of emails, letters, phone calls, and misconduct reports it has received over the unacceptable behavior displayed by team officials and parents attending CMSA games. To date, there has been a significant increase in team official suspensions and the number of incidents involving spectators, especially at the U10 level of play. Types of unacceptable behavior reported have included but not limited to: insulting and abusing the referees (and in most cases, a youth referee); adults yelling and swearing at each other; and in a few cases, verbal threats and physical confrontation. It has now got to a level where children at games are leaving the game frighten and crying. This type of behavior is unacceptable and no longer will be tolerated by CMSA and its member clubs. So starting immediately, CMSA is instituting a ZERO TOLERANCE policy for abuse towards game officials and unacceptable behavior by any team official or spectator at any CMSA game.

We ask that referees clamp down on the inappropriate behavior at games. Don't wait until it escalates to the point where you have to dismiss someone or abandon the game. Stop it when it starts so people know what is not going to be tolerated, just like you do in the first part of your game to set the tone for the players. If you do not deal with it right a way, other people will start acting inappropriately and possibly the players thus making your job much hard to do.

I do want to be a little more specific on what is unacceptable behavior and the different levels of dealing with it:

- In any game you referee, people are going to disagree with your calls or question your calls. Although the Laws of the Game state your decision is final, have a look at the way they are voicing their concerns before reacting.
 - Are they simply asking a question?
 - Do they look totally perplexed and have no clue what just happened?
 - Was it a simple and short outburst and that was it?
 - Was it mindless chatter?
- Depending on how the person asked or made their remark, in most cases, a quick word with the person asking (telling) them to "tone it down" is sufficient enough. You might actually see that their question or statement is valid and needs to deal with it. What we are trying to say here is to think and listen to what is being said before reacting. As referees we do need to have some thick skin and can't get caught up with everything that is being said. People often do and say things in the heat of the moment, but will calm down very quickly.
- But if a person keeps questioning your calls or commenting on your performance, then they are starting to show dissent and should be dealt with as per the Laws of the Game."

