

Zero Tolerance Policy

Youth sports offer a tremendous opportunity for children to build self-esteem and learn fundamental skills, while providing adults a platform to be positive role models and impart the values of good sportsmanship.

Our club places a priority on development over winning, adhering to a philosophy centered on long-term player development. AC Marin aims to ensure that you and your child enjoy the game of soccer, and we are sharing this information to assist you in providing knowledge on how assist in creating a positive experience for all.

To address the escalating incidents of aggressive and violent behavior towards referees during NorCal Premier Soccer League events, AC Marin has implemented a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**. This policy applies to coaches, players, parents, and other supporters, as well as referees, effective immediately. Drinking alcohol, smoking, or the use of illegal substances is strictly prohibited during AC Marin practices, games, and events. Abusive and obscene language, violent play, violent conduct, fighting, and other unacceptable behaviors (including sarcasm, taunting, etc.) will not be tolerated during any club event. The ultimate responsibility for the actions of coaches, players, and spectators rests with the club.

Coaches are entrusted with the responsibility of providing referee support and maintaining control over spectators. This policy applies at all times—prior to, during, and after the game, at the soccer field, and in its immediate surrounding areas. It is the responsibility of the club to provide clear instructions to their coaches on how to fulfill this crucial responsibility.

We recognize the importance of good sportsmanship, emphasizing the development of players rather than solely focusing on winning. To ensure a positive experience for all, we are sharing the guidelines for parents, spectators, players, and coaches:

Parents and Spectators

No parent or other spectator shall address the referee or assistant referees at any time.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Spectators shall not make derogatory comments to players of either team.
- Spectators shall not dispute calls during or after the game.
- Spectators shall not advise the referee to watch certain players or attend to rough play.
- Spectators shall not yell at the referee, EVER, including criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, discriminatory comments, or feedback of any kind before, during, or after the game.

Allowable exceptions to the above are:

- Spectators may respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation with a parent or spectator in a calm, respectful manner.
- Spectators may point out an emergency or safety issues, such as a player down on the field or observed lightning.

Players

Communications between players and referees are governed by the FIFA Laws of the Game. Penalties for violating the Laws of the Game will be governed by the Laws themselves and the rules of AC Marin.

Coaches and Bench Personnel

It is the responsibility of all coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players, and supporters in all matches. Failure to do so undermines the referee's authority and the integrity of the game, resulting in a hostile environment for players, the referee, coaches, bench personnel and spectators. As role models for all the participants and spectators, coaches participating in an AC Marin event are expected to be supportive of, and to applaud the effort, good play, and sportsmanship on the part of ALL players from either team in a contest. By example, coaches and bench personnel are expected to show that although they are competing in a game, participants always have respect for the opponent, referees, and spectators.

Our club will not tolerate negative behavior exhibited either by demonstrative actions and gestures or by ill-intentioned remarks, including those addressed toward the referees, players, or coaches of an opposing team. Coaches exhibiting hostile, negative, sarcastic, or otherwise ill-intentioned behavior toward referees, opposing players or coaches will be subject to sanction by the referee and subsequent sanctions may be imposed by the club.

Coaches shall not interact directly or indirectly with the coaches or players of the opposing team during the game in any manner that may be construed as negative, hostile, or sarcastic either by way of demonstrative actions and gestures or by ill-intentioned remarks.

Coaches shall not offer dissent to any call made by the officials at any time.

Coaches shall not address the referee during the game except to:

- Respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation
- Point out emergency or safety issues
- Make substitutions
- Ask the referee to repeat a call (this should be infrequent)
- Ask for the time remaining in the half (this should be infrequent).

Coaches are allowed to ask a referee after a game, in a polite and constructive way, to explain a Law or foul but not judgment calls made in a game.

- Polite and friendly concern can be exchanged with the referee. If the polite tone of the conversation changes, the referee may abandon the exchange at any time.
- Absolutely no sarcasm, harassment or intimidation is allowed.

Any violation of this policy will be assessed on an individual basis.

Disciplinary Action

If any game is interrupted because of behavioral issues, involved parties will have to comply with a NorCal PAD* committee suspension and a club suspension.

All disciplinary action for violation of the ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY is within the sole discretion of the Executive Director, Senior Technical Director and Board of Directors. Disciplinary action may include suspension or expulsion of the individual. No reimbursement of fees or other costs will be made to a dismissed player or player's family. This may include loss of financial aid assistance.

*PAD Committee: The NorCal Protests, Appeals, and Discipline process manages all issues related to violations of the NorCal Handbook and Code of Ethics, as well as Red Card suspensions.