

**HVYSL / ENYYSA / US Soccer POLICY 531-9**

**Effective March 1, 2025**

<b>Coaches, Bench Personnel, Players, Managers, Trainers - Non- Physical Abuse</b>				
<b>Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Minimum Penalty</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>
<b>Level 1: Verbal Taunting</b>	Speech or gestures that belittle the referee, damage credibility, or undermine authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Do you even know the rules?"</li> <li>"Did you forget your glasses?"</li> <li>"What's the other team paying you?"</li> </ul>	2-game suspension <sup>†</sup>	ENYYSA Arbitration Hearing*
<b>Level 2: Harassment / Intimidation</b>	Language or body language meant to make a referee feel unsafe, without explicit threats of violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using expletives ("That call was complete \$h*t!")</li> <li>Personal attacks ("You're a F-ing joke!")</li> <li>Getting in the referee's face</li> </ul>	4-game suspension <sup>†</sup>	ENYYSA Arbitration Hearing*
<b>Level 3: Threats / Derogatory Language</b>	Aggressive, attacking, derogatory language, cyberbullying, doxing, or threats of violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"I'll see you in the parking lot."</li> <li>"You better watch your back!"</li> <li>Social media posts attacking the referee</li> </ul>	6-game suspension and/or 6-24 months <sup>†</sup>	ENYYSA Arbitration Hearing*
<b>Level 4: Offensive or Discriminatory Act</b>	Discriminatory or derogatory words or actions based on race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, disability, sexual orientation, language, or religion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Racial/ethnic slurs</li> <li>Offensive gestures</li> <li>Homophobic or sexist language</li> </ul>	10-game suspension and/or 12-24 months <sup>†</sup>	ENYYSA Arbitration Hearing*
<b>Coaches, Bench Personnel, Players, Managers, Trainers - Physical Abuse</b>				
<b>Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Minimum Penalty</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>
<b>Level 1: Minor or Slight Touching</b>	Unwanted but minor physical contact with the referee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tapping the referee's shoulder to get their attention.</li> <li>Touching the referee's chest with a finger.</li> <li>Lightly bumping into the referee.</li> </ul>	3-game suspension and/or 1-6 months <sup>†</sup>	ENYYSA Arbitration Hearing*
<b>Level 2: Intentional Confrontation</b>	Using physical contact to intimidate or provoke a confrontation, or causing property damage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shoving the referee.</li> <li>Forcefully grabbing the referee's arm or jersey.</li> <li>Throwing a water bottle near the referee.</li> <li>Dumping the referee's bag into a trash can.</li> </ul>	10-game suspension and/or 6-24 months <sup>†</sup>	ENYYSA Arbitration Hearing*
<b>Level 3: Violent Contact</b>	Malicious, violent physical contact meant to cause harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Punching, kicking, elbowing, or spitting on the referee.</li> <li>Choking the referee.</li> <li>Throwing objects at the referee with intent to hit.</li> <li>Intentionally tackling the referee.</li> </ul>	12-game suspension up to a lifetime ban <sup>†</sup>	ENYYSA Arbitration Hearing*

<sup>†</sup>For 2<sup>nd</sup> time offenses penalty is doubled. **If the referee is a minor the penalty is tripled.**

\*The league is free to add additional fines or penalties for violations of league rules or codes of conduct. The league is free to assess other penalties for non 531-9 issues such as parents insulting players or coaches arguing with each other...etc

Parents - Spectators - Fans - <b>Verbal/Physical Abuse</b>				
Offense		Penalty		Jurisdiction
<b>**Gross mistreatment as defined by US Policy 531 for Verbal abuse</b>	1st Offense	Adult Referee - \$250 Minor Referee - \$750		League
	2nd Offense	Adult Referee - \$500 Minor Referee - \$1500		League
	3rd Offense	Adult Referee - \$1000 Minor Referee - \$3000		*ENYYSA Supervisory Hearing
<b>**Assault or abuse as defined by US Policy 531 for Physical abuse</b>		Adult Referee - \$1000 Minor Referee - \$3000	Reported to ENY	*ENYYSA Supervisory Hearing

†Additionally, if it is determined that the team officials (coaches, managers, club officials, etc.) either failed to act appropriately to control the sidelines or failed to control the sidelines after instructions from a referee, the coach will be suspended for 3 games.

\*The League is free to add additional fines or penalties for violations of League rules or codes of conduct. League is free to assess other penalties for non 531-9 issues such as parents insulting players or coaches arguing with each other...etc

### **\*\*US Soccer Policy 531-9**

USSF Policy 531-9 (<https://www.ussoccer.com/governance/bylaws> ) describes three categories of offenses towards match officials; gross mistreatment, abuse and assault. Those definitions are as follows.

#### **Referee Assault and Referee Abuse**

USSF defines assault and abuse as follows

a. **Referee assault** is any deliberate physical action against a Referee. **Referee abuse** is extreme, deliberate, and non-contact behavior that causes a Referee or Protected Party significant harm. Actions in this category may be subject to an immediate suspension, meaning that the perpetrator cannot appear at the next sanctioned match. Assault and abuse include, but not limited to, the following actions or behavior committed against a Referee or Protected Parties:

- i. Imposing physical harm upon a Referee or a Protected Party, including by use of objects or equipment.
- ii. Any act that endangers the Referee's physical wellbeing, whether deliberate or merely reckless.
- iii. Any form of unwanted physical contact, including but not limited to pushing, hitting, striking, kicking, choking, or spitting at the Referee.
- iv. Any behavior that constitutes a criminal offense under any applicable law.
- v. Threatening, either directly or in insinuation, physical harm, including by use of objects or equipment, to a Referee or a Protected Party or property. Threatening is defined as any statement or action that instills reasonable fear of acts of violence to a person's safety or property.
- vi. Threats of harm or any retaliatory action against the Referee or their Protected Parties, including threat of exclusion from assignment or future participation opportunity.

#### **Gross Mistreatment**

USSF defines gross mistreatment as follows

Actions that do not meet above assault or abuse definitions, but cause a Referee or Protected Party harm, may be subject to U.S. Soccer's gross mistreatment framework. Gross mistreatment means any deliberate, non-contact behavior that is expected to cause harm to a Referee. Gross mistreatment includes, but not limited to, the following actions or behavior committed against a Referee or Protected Parties:

- a. Severe or repeated harassment, including hate speech or discriminatory remarks based on race, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disabilities, or any other legally protected characteristic.
- b. Extreme verbal attacks that would cause emotional harm to a reasonable person.
- c. Approaching a Referee when they arrive or depart the venue with aggression (e.g., intimidation).
- d. Any form of cyberbullying, including spreading false information about the Referee, sharing the Referee's personal information (aka doxing), or publicly posting content that ridicules or mocks the Referee or uses hate speech.
- e. Questioning the Referee's character, integrity, honesty, truthfulness, or impartiality.
- f. Yelling insults, taunting, making, or expressing derogatory/belittling remarks towards a Referee.
- g. Pervasive action that belittles or undermines the Referee's authority or intended to cast doubt on the Referee.