



NEBRASKA REFEREE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
INSTRUCTION ▪ COACHING ▪ MENTORSHIP ▪ OFFICIATING

NRDP Directive For Dealing with Slurs

There are rare occasions during a match where a referee may hear a derogatory slur directed at a player by another player, team official, or spectator. More likely, a player reports to the referee that another individual has directed such a comment to them outside of the referee's hearing.

Slurs can include abusive comments concerning an individual's race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, or any other quality or characteristic of that person.

The following are instructions for the referee crew when they either hear these comments or when instances are reported to them.

A. How To Address Slurs From Players/Team Officials When Heard

If you hear it . . . It MUST be dealt with.

If the offender is a player or team official, do the following:

1. The game should be stopped immediately. The entire referee crew, the player/team official who made the abusive comment, and both head coaches should confer in an area away from the benches (if the head coach was the offender, engage an assistant coach, if available).
2. Tell the coaches what was said.
3. Show the offending player/team official a red card.
4. Restart the match as quickly as possible.
5. Complete a report in both Stack (red card report) and a Key Incident Report in FairWhistle. Include in your report the *exact* comment as made and other relevant information (the name and number of the player/team official making the comment, the name/number of the player to whom the comment was directed, time of match, etc.).

B. How To Address Slurs From Players/Team Officials When NOT Heard

If a player or team official tells a member of the referee crew that an opponent used offensive, insulting, or abusive comments and/or gestures, do the following:

1. The game should be stopped as soon as possible. The entire referee crew should engage the complaining team/player first and determine what was allegedly said and by whom. Do not engage in a debate as to whether the comment was actually made as alleged.
2. The entire referee crew and both head coaches should confer in an area away from the benches. The crew should relay to the head coaches of both teams what was reported.

3. Inform the coaches that additional incidents may result in immediate ejection, a temporary suspension of the match, the match being abandoned and/or teams being removed from the competition. Make it clear that this is a last and final warning for both teams.
4. Offer the coaches the option to address their respective teams and allow a reasonable amount of time if they wish to do so.
5. Restart as appropriate as quickly as possible.
6. Complete a Key Incident Report in FairWhistle even if the comment cannot be confirmed. Include in your report the *exact* comment as allegedly made and other relevant information (the name and number of the player/team official who allegedly made the comment, the name/number of the player to whom the comment was directed, time of match, etc.).

C. How To Address Slurs From Spectators

If the slur is *heard* by a member of the referee crew, or *reported* to the crew by a player/team official,

1. The game should be stopped as soon as possible. Direct players to their team benches.
2. The entire referee crew and both head coaches should confer in an area away from the benches.
3. If a member of the referee crew heard the statement, and the spectator can be identified, the referee shall request that the head coach remove the spectator involved from the vicinity of the game. The game shall not be restarted until the spectator has left.
4. If a member of the referee crew heard the statement but the spectator cannot be identified, or if the statement was reported to the referee crew by a player or team official, the referee shall request that the head coach engage his/her team's spectators to help identify the offending spectator and confirm that the statement was made.
5. If the statement is subsequently confirmed and the spectator is identified, the referee shall request that the head coach remove the spectator as described above. If the reported comment cannot be confirmed, or the spectator cannot be identified, no further action can be taken by the referee crew.
6. In all cases where these comments are heard or reported, regardless of whether one or more spectators are removed, the referee shall request each head coach to inform their team's spectators that any additional incidents may result in all spectators being removed from the touchline, a temporary suspension of the match, the match being abandoned and/or teams being removed from the competition.
7. Restart as appropriate as quickly as possible.
8. Complete a Key Incident Report in FairWhistle even if the comment cannot be confirmed or the spectator cannot be identified. Include in your report the *exact* comment as made and other relevant information (the name of the individual who made the comment, the name/number of the player to whom the comment was directed, time of match, etc.).

If you have any questions concerning the above, contact Jim McVay, State Referee Administrator, at jim.mcvay@nrdp.soccer, or at 402.630.7815.