



**NEBRASKA REFEREE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**  
INSTRUCTION ▪ ASSESSMENT ▪ MENTORSHIP ▪ OFFICIATING

## MANAGING PARENTS/SPECTATORS

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One of the things that we as referees often find most difficult is managing parents and other spectators during games that we officiate. The following is presented in order to make certain that referees are managing these situations in an efficient and uniform manner.

The *Laws of the Game* do not authorize officials to manage sideline behavior by directing a spectator to leave or imposing other sanctions. In addition, NRDP has found that, in general, a referee engaging a spectator regarding poor behavior only makes matters worse.

Furthermore, referees cannot caution or send off a coach for irresponsible behavior by a team's fans. The only action that a referee may take is described in Law 5.3 of the IFAB *Laws of the Game* which provides:

A referee . . . stops, suspends or abandons the match for any offences or because of outside interference.

With this in mind, NRDP's directive to referees for managing spectator behavior is as follows:

1. The referee should advise the head coach that the inappropriate spectator behavior must stop and request that the coach manage their spectators.
2. The coach or other team official must be given an opportunity to instruct that team's spectators to modify their behavior.
3. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the referee shall make a final request of the coach that they manage spectator behavior, or the game will be suspended/abandoned.
4. If the spectator disruption continues, and if the situation warrants, the referee may suspend and/or abandon the match as permitted under Law 5.3. During the suspension, the referee may seek assistance from a field marshal, league representative, Referee Coach, Referee Mentor, or Referee Trainer, if available.
5. If it is clear that a match cannot be resumed, the referee may abandon the match as permitted under Law 5.3. Abandoning a match is a serious and significant step and should be an option of last resort. However, NRDP understands that in rare circumstances it is the best option.
6. A full and detailed report must be provided to the league and an email sent to [reportabuse@nrdp.soccer](mailto:reportabuse@nrdp.soccer). Make sure to note the time of the match, score, and cautions/send-offs of record, the location of the ball, and the appropriate restart.

If you have any questions concerning the above, contact Dave Glatte, SYRA, at [dave.glatte@ndp.soccer](mailto:dave.glatte@ndp.soccer), Brent Wilson, SDD, at [brent.wilson@nrdp.soccer](mailto:brent.wilson@nrdp.soccer), or Jim McVay, SRA, at [jim.mcvay@nrdp.soccer](mailto:jim.mcvay@nrdp.soccer).