

CASA REFEREE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

(Indoor & Outdoor, U-11 through Adult)

Version 1: For CASA Board Approval — January 27-2026

1. Purpose

Central Alberta Soccer Association (CASA) is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful environment for all Match Officials. Referee abuse—verbal, physical, or threatening—damages referee retention and compromises match safety.

CASA Soccer's #No-Ref – No-Game program identifies Match Official abuse as a widespread, systemic issue that threatens officiating availability and participant well-being. (Especially new young Referees)

This policy establishes:

- Behavioural expectations for **spectators, coaches/team officials, and players**
 - Match-day procedures for responding to abuse
 - CASA's discipline structure
 - A **CASA-controlled Take-5–Style Pilot** for *spectator abuse only*.
 - CASA's Take 5 program is explicitly a **supervised pilot only**, not for general use without governing-body authorization. CASA will follow this controlled-use principle.
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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All **CASA indoor & outdoor competitions, U-9 to Adult.**
 - All CASA-sanctioned leagues, tournaments, festivals, and training
 - All participants and attendees: players, coaches, team officials, spectators/fans, volunteers, and match officials
 - All facilities used by CASA, including the **Red Deer County Dome**, which maintains an onsite duty/facility manager
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3. Definitions

Match Official – Referee, AR, Fourth official, or any CASA-appointed official.

Referee Abuse – Any verbal, written, non-verbal, or physical conduct that intimidates, threatens, harasses, bullies, or undermines a Match Official.

Threatening Behaviour – Conduct causing a reasonable fear for safety, including confrontations, following officials, or aggressive approach. (During or after games)
CASA Discipline Regulations affirm ASA jurisdiction for misconduct involving threats or assault toward Match Officials.

4. Behaviour Standards

4.1 Spectators / Fans / Parents

Spectators must:

- Respect decisions of officials and encourage others to do the same, consistent with ASA's Code of Conduct.
- Avoid abusive language, sarcastic clapping, intimidation attempts, rude dissent, name-calling, foul language, or entering the field—behaviours identified above is unacceptable.
- Follow all instructions from coaches, match officials, CASA staff, **Field Marshals**, **Referee Liaisons** or facility management (**Dome**).

4.2 Coaches / Team Officials

Coaches must:

- Act as **primary controllers of their spectators**
- Address their spectators immediately when instructed
- Provide only technical instruction and avoid challenging referee decisions, consistent with ASA/CASA conduct expectations
- Ensure any dismissed persons leave the facility or field of play promptly

4.3 Players

Players must:

- Avoid dissent that becomes personal, abusive, or threatening

- Avoid crowding officials, aggressive gestures, or profanity at officials
 - Follow LOTG and all directives from officials
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5. Match-Day Response Protocol

5.1 Authority & Safety

Match Officials may **pause, delay, or abandon** matches to ensure safety. Officials' authority aligns with LOTG and CASA discipline support.

5.2 Indoor Facilities (including the Dome)

CASA will ensure:

- A designated "Safe Room"
- Facility Duty Manager support
- Controlled exit corridors so officials do not face hallway or parking-lot confrontations
(ASA Discipline Regulations treat threatening behaviour toward officials as a serious misconduct category requiring jurisdictional handling.)

5.3 Immediate Steps

When abuse occurs:

1. Stop play if needed
 2. Identify the offending individual(s)
 3. Require coach to intervene (spectators) or sanction via LOTG (players/team officials)
 4. Request duty manager/security for removal
 5. If threats occur officials move to safety immediately; match may be abandoned
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6. Reporting Requirements

6.1 Match Officials

Submit:

- Game report
- Misconduct details (names, behaviours, quotes, witnesses)
CASA Take 5 Stage 3 requires complete reporting upon abandonment.

6.2 CASA DRA & Discipline Committee

CASA has its **own Discipline Committee**.

The DRA will:

- Receive reports
- Forward cases to CASA Discipline
- Escalate to ASA only when behaviour involves threats/assault (ASA jurisdiction)

6.3 Clubs

Clubs must cooperate with identification of spectators & witnesses.

7. Discipline & Sanctions

7.1 CASA Discipline Committee

May impose:

- Spectator removal and bans
- Team fines
- Coach suspensions
- Game forfeitures for environment failure (extreme cases)

7.2 ASA Escalation (Mandatory for Threats)

ASA Discipline Regulations assert jurisdiction for cases of threatening behaviour or attempted/actual assault toward Match Officials.

8. Education & Prevention

8.1 Required Coach Briefings

Coaches receive annual training on managing spectators and CASA Take-5–Style Pilot expectations.

8.2 Signage & Conditions of Entry

Spectator expectations will be posted at all venues.

ASA Code of Conduct requires spectators to respect match officials.

8.3 Youth Officials

CASA will prioritize pairing youth referees with mentors, when possible, especially indoors.

9. CASA TAKE-5–STYLE PILOT (Spectator Abuse Only)

(Appendix — CASA Controlled Program)

Important Compliance Note:

CASA's Take 5 is a **restricted pilot program** used only under direct governing-body supervision and not for general use by all officials. CASA adopts this model **as a controlled pilot only**, requiring board approval, specific training, and game-day supervision.

9.1 Pilot Scope

- Applies only to **Spectator Abuse**
- Does **not** apply to players or coaches (LOTG + CASA + ASA discipline applies)
- Only for matches where trained referees have been authorized by the CASA Referee Department
- Recommended for U-11 to U-17 youth environments and high-risk adult divisions

9.2 Phase System

PHASE 1 — WARNING

- Match Official pauses play.
- Official instructs coaches to address their spectators directly.
- No added time. Restart per LOTG.

PHASE 2 — TIMEOUT (“TAKE 5”)

- Second incident → 5-minute stoppage.
- No activity allowed during timeout.
- Restart per LOTG; no added time.

PHASE 3 — ABANDON

- Third incident → match abandonment.
- Officials file full report; CASA Discipline + possible ASA escalation if threats occurred.

9.3 Automatic Bypass to Phase 3

If threats, aggressive approach, or attempts to confront officials occur, officials **immediately abandon** and proceed to safety (ASA jurisdiction applies).

9.4 Facility Support Requirement

Take-5–Style Pilot cannot operate unless a **Duty Manager** or site convenor is present to enforce removal.

10. Annual Review

CASA will review this policy each year and after any major incident.