



The Newfoundland and Labrador Soccer Association Zero Tolerance Policy towards the harassment of officials.

The development of young officials, as well as players, takes time. Officials in Newfoundland and Labrador have received classroom training and are required to pass an examination before they can referee within our system. When they officiate they are gaining the experience required to become a good official. At the club level and in the minor soccer system many of the officials that parents will see are mostly at the entry-level, not the experienced officials you may see refereeing higher level games. At Provincial tournaments, many regions or clubs, use young officials who, although they have completed their District Level courses are inexperienced.

Harassment is defined as offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening behaviour directed at an individual. The CSA Constitution (<http://www.canadasoccer.com/eng/docs/constitution.pdf>) contains a more exhaustive description of harassment. Although evidence is largely anecdotal, harassment of officials by spectators and coaches is well recognized as a major factor contributing to lack of retention in sports. Soccer is certainly not alone in this regard, and although officials leave the sport for many reasons, having been harassed by spectators or coaches should not be one of them. In soccer, as in many sports, most harassment (~95%) is verbal, and commonly difficult to deal with. However, the NLSA is implementing measures to help eliminate harassment from our game.

The NLSA administers soccer at all age and skill levels and the following is sub-divided into Minor and Senior. These measures apply to all NLSA league and tournament play (Provincial minor and senior tournaments, Challenge Cup and Jubilee Trophy), although clubs and regions are encouraged to adopt this policy for their leagues. Some regions already have their own policies towards referee harassment, and the following is adopted from theirs and from other associations in North America and internationally.

Minor Leagues, including Provincial tournaments

This policy has a simple premise: All persons responsible for a team and all the spectators should support the referee. This policy has a simple guideline: Don't talk to the referee during the game!

Naturally, there are **exceptions** to this guideline and they are as follows:

A. Person Responsible for a team (i.e., Coach)

During the Game:

- Responding to a referee initiating a communication.
- Making substitutions.
- Indicating kickers at penalty shoot outs.
- Pointing out emergencies or safety issues.

At half-time or at the end of the game:

- A coach can ask a referee to explain law(s) in a polite and constructive way.
- Polite feedback can be given to a referee.
- Absolutely NO sarcasm, harassment and intimidation is permitted.

Penalties:

As with all policies there must be penalties for those not wishing to abide by them. These are covered by the Laws of the Game, and they give the referee the power to abandon games and/or to dismiss team officials (coach, assistants, managers etc.) from the bench if they indulge in abusive behaviour. Referees have been instructed to enforce the Laws.

B. Spectators

During the game:

- Referee initiating a communication.
- Pointing out emergencies or safety issues.

Penalties:

Although the Laws of the Game provide referees with the authority to suspend or terminate a match due to outside interference, there is limited recourse for a young official in what is commonly an intimidating situation. The NLSA therefore requires the use of Field Marshals at all Provincial Tournament games to act as monitors. This is based on the premise that communication should be between participants in the game, rather than between the referee and spectators, which may be less than beneficial. As such, referees have been instructed to direct their concerns about spectators to the field marshal.

1st Infraction	Referee should stop the game and ask the field marshal to quiet the offending spectator.
2nd Infraction	The referee shall instruct the field marshal to direct the spectator to leave the field. The referee should abandon the game if the spectator does not leave the field.

If the referee abandons the game, the referee shall file a report and the NLSA may impose further sanctions.

NLSA Senior Leagues (Challenge Cup and Jubilee Trophy)

Referees at this level are considerably more experienced than their counterparts at the minor level. The pace, skill level and intensity of games is also considerably higher and the ability of officials to deal with incidences of harassment from players and coaching staff is greater.

However, officials are still limited in their control of spectators. Although a certain amount of 'comment' from spectators is generally accepted, there will be no tolerance for comments of a racial or sexual nature directed at game officials, and incidents of threatened or actual assault on game officials will be dealt with harshly. To effectively deal with spectators, host clubs/teams will be expected to provide clearly identified security/field marshals at all CC/JT games, as outlined in the NLSA Disciplinary Policy. The security/field marshals shall act on the direction of the game officials, and/or club staff.

Reported incidences by the referee of harassment from spectators may result in sanctions from the NLSA to offending teams, which could include points deductions, moving of future games, banning of spectators etc.

Officials' Assessment

The power given to officials obviously does not come without a price. Officials are expected to behave in an appropriate manner and referee games to the best of their abilities. To ensure this occurs, officials are assessed on a regular basis by higher qualified referees. This process is another important step in referee development.

Coaches will also have the opportunity to comment on the referee's performance, through completion of an evaluation form found on the NLSA website. It is on this evaluation form that comments about the officiating are to be made, **and not verbally at the game.**



Martin Batterson
NLSA Director of Officials



Club Report on Match Referee

Club _____

Date _____

Competition _____

Home Club	
Away Club	

Referee	
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Referee's Performance

Please tick appropriate box	Disappointing	Reasonable	Good	Excellent
a) Overall control				
b) Overall decision making				
c) Communication and player management				

SECTION 3. Additional comments (Continue overleaf if necessary)

If any area is marked "disappointing", detailed, constructive comments which could help improve the referee's future performances are required:

Name (please print).....

Position held in club.....

Signature:.....

Please return to Martin Batterson, Director of Officials, 52 Munden Drive, Mt. Pearl; martinbatterson@gmail.com; fax NLSA office, within 48 hours of the match