



To All our Clubs, Coaches, Players and Fans of East Central Ontario Soccer Association:

During the first month of our season, we have seen an alarming amount of serious incidents arise regarding the treatment of Match Officials.

THIS HAS TO STOP.

These incidents have all come from Players, Coaches and Spectators. We have now had more disciplinary action in direct relation to Match Official Abuse this season, then the previous 3 seasons combined in this district.

It is not OK to Insult, Argue, Berate, Yell at, or worse, Threaten the Referee's in any shape or form.

Since the COVID shut down - we lost nearly 70% of our Match Officials. ECOSA, and all of the clubs that fall under ECOSA have worked very hard to recruit, train and develop new and returning referee's. We ask that you please have patience with the officials!

I am certain that no one comes to your job to scream at you for 50 to 90 minutes! The match officials do not deserve this either! Many are learning and developing. They are often put into a game above their comfort level both to learn, AND so the game can take place most often there is not another referee option. Remember, this is how they learn also! **There IS NO GAME if we do not have referee's.** Most often there is NOT another referee option to do the game and that person stepped up and put their name forward to ref the game so that it wouldn't get canceled!

We have a ZERO TOLERANCE for MATCH OFFICIAL ABUSE IN THIS DISTRICT.

Disciplinary actions (suspensions and/or fines) have increased this year when coming to match official abuse. Sanctions are higher, and often double when involving a match official under 18 years old.

Starting Immediately, ECOSA will be implementing the Ontario Soccer Take 5 Plan.

- The first problem with spectators - The Match Official will warn the coach(es) about their spectator(s) behaviour. The coach(es) will then be expected to go to their spectators to calm them.
- The second problem with the spectator(s) will result in a full game time out for 5 minutes. The game will stop. No activity will take place. The players will not practice on the field. The stopped time will NOT be added as additional time to the game. The referee will report this to the District and/or League.
- The third problem with the spectators - The game will immediately end and applicable disciplinary action will be taken against the offending team(s) and their Club(s).

Please work with us to ensure a positive game experience for everyone! Thank you in advance for your cooperation regarding this matter.

~ Scott Cockburn, ECOSA Chair