

Dealing with Player Violence

AYSO National Referee Commission Recommendations

Many possible scenarios of violence exist. The referee must assess each situation and determine appropriate action considering personal safety, player safety and game control.

The Law does not require anyone to place themselves in peril and AYSO referees should not subject themselves to undue personal risk. However, violence needs to be stopped if it erupts and referees need to assist in controlling it when it can be done without unduly risking personal safety.

Recommended procedures for referees:

- Move quickly to the location of the problem.
- Blow the whistle loudly in the vicinity of the fracas to distract the “combatants”.
- Assess the risk to your personal safety by further intervention and do not attempt to intervene if you determine it is unsafe. Referees are not required to put their personal safety at risk.
- Consider intervention only if possible without undue personal risk. A referee who intervenes during player violence must:
 - Remain in a “passive role.”
 - Refrain from physically “manhandling” any players or other persons involved.
 - Endeavor to form a barrier between “combatants”.
 - Urge the coaching staffs to assist.
 - Endeavor to contain the fracas.
 - Be aware of the reactions of other players and discourage them from joining the fracas.
- Provide a detailed report of the facts of the incident in the game report for reference.

Concluding Caution:

- Addressing violent conduct is everyone’s job. Regional staff should be proactive in taking steps to address the issue with programs such as Safe Haven and Kids Zone.
- Prompt disciplinary responses are encouraged if violence occurs during games.