

Dear Coaches

Referees from the New England Rugby Referee Society (NERRS) are volunteers that donate their time to support the amateur game in New England. Your actions and behavior at a match have a direct impact on referee's willingness to volunteer.



Referees do not shout at players for poor skills or bad decision-making, nor do they scream or confront coaches for inferior game plans or substandard coaching.

However, it appears based on three weekends of rugby in New England this Fall season, the opposite is becoming the norm as far as sideline behavior is concerned. Players, team staff/representatives and coaches have been consistently observed and reported for abusing referees. Much to our disappointment, it is happening at a rate that necessitates this reminder for all coaches.

As a community who love the game and want it to continue to grow and be successful in the USA, it is our combined responsibility to adhere to the principles and spirit of the game. To protect these principles, we feel a reminder of USA Rugby's 2016 Game Management Guidelines for dealing with referee abuse is needed.

1. Verbal abuse by team coaches, team staff or team substitutes directed at match officials or players should not be tolerated and the following process should be followed:
  1. The referee will ask the identified person to refrain from their behavior
  2. On the second occasion the referee will EJECT the person from the grounds
  3. Zero tolerance approach should be applied and if the person refuses to leave, the referee should request that team's captain to assist
  4. Failing compliance the referee may abandon the match
  5. The referee must restart the game according to the latest stoppage and must NOT award a penalty due to the sideline behavior
2. It is essential that we, as a community, stand together and work together to develop rugby in the United States. It will be through mutual respect and support that we grow the game. As referees, we need to ensure that we follow the above process regarding abuse as to eliminate it from the game.

NERRS encourages positive, constructive feedback on referees' performance. Teams that video record matches are encouraged to share those videos with the referee as a development tool for the referee. Additionally, teams can submit a [referee evaluation form](#) via the Society's website.

We appreciate everyone's positive efforts to grow the game of rugby.

Yours in rugby,

Chris Schuyler  
President, New England Rugby Referee Society