

# Humble-Atascocita Football League

## *A Winning Tradition!*

P.O. Box 623  
Humble, TX 77347-0623  
(281) 454-7153  
www.humblefootball.org

### **HAFL Policy on Prevention of Referee Abuse**

1. All HAFL members (coaches, board members, other referees, and parents) shall, if necessary, intervene if a coach or spectator is verbally abusing a referee.
  - a. Handling general dissent is part of a referee's job. If the referee appears to be managing the dissent appropriately, no intervention is necessary.
2. All HAFL members shall report any incident of abuse of referees to the Division Commissioner, the HAFL Referee Administrator, Supervisor of Referees and the HAFL League President. This report should happen within 24 hours of the incident if possible.
3. The League President, Division Commissioner, Supervisor of Referees and the HAFL Referee Administrator, upon investigating the incident and after hearing from all parties, shall implement appropriate discipline before the next game if possible. The offending parent or coach shall be notified of the disciplinary action. The following are guidelines for disciplinary action:
  - a. Verbal abuse of a referee = 1 game/week suspension. Serious verbal abuse of a referee (e.g. using foul language) = 2 game/week suspension
  - b. Stepping onto the field or other threat to = 4 game/week suspension a referee (by word or action)
  - c. A letter of apology and/or public apology to the players and parents is recommended.
  - d. Immediate and sincere remorse on the part of the offending spectator or coach may be taken into consideration when implementing the discipline.
4. Egregious offenses (e.g. multiple abusive situations, physical contact with a referee, or exceptional misbehavior directed toward a referee) shall result in immediate suspension of the offending spectator/coach by the Division Commissioner and the Referee Administrator. The HAFL Board of Directors will determine further discipline. An egregious offense violates the fundamental mission of HAFL and requires strong action. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, suspension for the season, suspension for multiple seasons, "rehabilitation" (e.g. referee 10 games), or expulsion from the HAFL program.
5. Suspension: This is defined as being suspended from attending any HAFL game in the division where the incident occurred. Therefore, if a spectator is suspended, he or she may not attend any HAFL game at during the suspension. A coach may not coach nor attend any HAFL game during the suspension. The coach may still attend team practices during the suspension so as to not disrupt the skill development of his or her players. For egregious offenses, the suspension can include a ban from attending all HAFL events (e.g. games, practices, meetings) in all divisions.
6. The Division Commissioner shall enforce the disciplinary action by making sure the offending spectator or coach is not attending HAFL games during his or her suspension.
7. This policy only applies to the discipline of adult spectators and coaches. The policy does not apply to players or youth spectators.

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Coach

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Date

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## **Referee Abuse Prevention Policy- Zero Tolerance**

### **Policy Summary**

This policy is being implemented to eliminate referee abuse, both physical and verbal, and to discourage public dissent of a referee. Even though public dissent may not be considered abuse it is not in keeping with the HAFL principles of positive coaching and good sportsmanship and therefore will not be tolerated. There are appropriate avenues for coaches or spectators to share concerns about the quality of officiating. The Referee Administrator is welcome to hear any constructive comments on referees.

The Referee Abuse Prevention Policy- Zero Tolerance highlights the special circumstances for referees. One of the founding principles of HAFL is Positive Coaching. Referees should only be talked to positively and constructively. Therefore, abuse or dissent of referees will not be tolerated.

Guidelines for disciplinary action range from a one-game/week suspension for verbal abuse to expulsion from HAFL for egregious offenses. The details are outlined in the policy below.

### **Purpose of the Policy**

This policy is being implemented to eliminate referee abuse, both physical and verbal, and to discourage public dissent of a referee. It is never acceptable to verbally or physically abuse referees in any situation. There are appropriate avenues for coaches or spectators to share concerns about the quality of officiating. The Referee Administrator is welcome to hear any constructive comments on referees.

**Verbal or physical abuse of referees is as unacceptable as verbal and physical abuse of players, parents and league officials.** The purpose of this policy is to make clear that verbal and physical abuse of referees is unacceptable and to adopt basic standard sanctions for improper conduct. This policy is not intended to imply that referees are always right and the adult spectator or coach is always wrong.

*See Texas Statutes regarding interaction on the field of play with an Official (22.01 section 3 & 42.01) PENAL CODE CHAPTER 22. ASSAULTIVE OFFENSES*