

# Referee Abuse Prevention (RAP) Policy 531-9 Update: Key Highlights

## Overview

New policy aims to prevent misconduct toward referees. It defines abuse and assault, outlines penalties, and establishes hearing procedures.

## Who is Covered?

- All registered U.S. Soccer referees and those serving in emergency or support roles.
- Protection applies from arrival at the match venue until departure.

## Key Policy Changes

- **Referee Abuse:** is now classified into 4 levels of non-physical misconduct and 3 levels of physical misconduct, with clearer definitions and penalties.
- **Penalty Matrix:** has been implemented with clear guidelines on appropriate sanctions.

## Jurisdiction & Hearings

- Member Organizations handle misconduct allegations. Coordinate with your assignor who the competition authority is, and their proper reporting procedures.
- Referees are not guaranteed notification of hearing outcomes.

## Reporting & Appeals

- Referees must complete match reports for incidents within 48 hours - using the USSF Match Report and Supplemental Report. [LINK HERE](#)
- **Arkansas Referees:** reports go to the SRA [matthew.peterson@arkansassoccer.org](mailto:matthew.peterson@arkansassoccer.org) and the appropriate competition authority. If refing out of state, you should still CC your SRA if you have an ejection for referee abuse. Additionally, video and audio evidence may be submitted if unaltered along with the report.

## Best Practices for Referees

- **Immediate Action:** If abuse occurs, issue a red card ejection.
- **Physical Contact:** Unwanted contact is not to be tolerated if it makes you feel unsafe; however, a caution may suffice to manage. Use common sense with interactions.
- **Pregame Communication:** Inform coaches, captains, and players about the policy expectations during your pregame. Be Proactive!
- **Witnessing Abuse:** If not officiating, report incidents to your assignor and the SRA.
- **Spectators:** No change on spectator management, this should still be handled by the coach/club official. If an abusive spectator does not leave, abandon the match and safely leave the area. Spectator abuse should still be written up in the match report.