# WEST NIAGARA SOCCER CLUB

## POLICY ON ABUSE OF MATCH OFFICIALS

**RESPECT • DEVELOPMENT • COMMUNITY • TOGETHER WE RISE**

### ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ABUSE OF MATCH OFFICIALS

West Niagara Soccer Club is committed to making soccer safe and respectful for all participants. Abuse of match officials is unacceptable and will be addressed promptly and appropriately.

## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

West Niagara Soccer Club (WNSC) is a strong supporter of making sport safe for all participants. Any player, team official, parent/guardian, family member or spectator who engages in abusive conduct toward a match official during a WNSC game will be dealt with under this policy and other applicable Club policies.

WNSC will take appropriate action in incidents ranging from minor to major, including assisting match officials in submitting applicable reports to Ontario Soccer. Initially, incidents will be reviewed by the Club Head Referee. Major incidents may be referred to the applicable District and Provincial Associations.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to players, team officials, coaches, parents/guardians, family members and spectators attending or participating in WNSC games. It applies to conduct occurring at or near the soccer facility and to conduct directed toward match officials in connection with a WNSC game.

## 3. WHAT CONSTITUTES ABUSE

Abusive conduct may be verbal, physical, threatening, intimidating, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate. Examples include: 🚫 Verbal inappropriate language that is not directed at any one individual.

- 🚫 Verbal inappropriate language directed at a match official or other individual.
- 🚫 Insults, profanity, taunting, harassment or personal attacks directed toward a match official.
- 🚫 Threatening or intimidating behaviour, gestures or body language.
- 🚫 Aggressive or physically inappropriate behaviour anywhere at or near the soccer facility.
- 🚫 Entering the field or approaching a match official in an aggressive or confrontational manner.
- 🚫 Any physical contact, assault or attempted assault.
- 🚫 Discriminatory, racist, sexist, homophobic or other abusive comments.
- 🚫 Using social media, messaging, email or other electronic communication to harass or threaten a match official.

## 4. INCIDENT SEVERITY

The Club Head Referee will make the initial determination of the level of severity. The following classifications are used for the Club's internal process:

**MINOR** Verbal inappropriate language not directed at any one individual.

**MODERATE** Verbal inappropriate language directed at an individual.

**MAJOR** Physically inappropriate behaviour anywhere at or near the soccer facility.

## 5. CLUB PROCESS

The process below applies only where the match officials have not filed a Special Incident Report with Ontario Soccer. Where a Special Incident Report has been filed, the matter will proceed through the applicable Ontario Soccer, District or Provincial discipline process.

**MINOR 1st** Verbal request from the Club Head Referee to refrain from unsatisfactory behaviour.

**MINOR 2nd** Written warning from the Club Head Referee that the unsatisfactory behaviour must cease or further disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with Club bylaws and policies.

**MINOR 3rd** Disciplinary action as decided by the WNSC Board of Directors.

**MODERATE 1st** Written warning from the Club Head Referee that the unsatisfactory behaviour must cease or further disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with Club bylaws and policies.

**MODERATE 2nd** Disciplinary action as decided by the WNSC Board of Directors.

**MODERATE 3rd** The WNSC Board of Directors will refer the matter to the applicable District and/or Ontario Soccer authority for resolution and/or disciplinary action.

**MAJOR 1st** The WNSC Board of Directors will refer the matter to the applicable District and/or Ontario Soccer authority for resolution and/or disciplinary action.

## 6. IMMEDIATE AND SERIOUS INCIDENTS

Where conduct presents an immediate safety concern, involves physical aggression, threats or other serious misconduct, WNSC may take immediate steps to remove the individual from the vicinity of the field or facility and may refer the matter directly to the applicable District and/or Ontario Soccer authority.

Nothing in this policy prevents WNSC from taking stronger action where the circumstances warrant it, regardless of the individual's prior disciplinary history.

## 7. MATCH OFFICIAL REPORTS AND GOVERNING DISCIPLINE

Match officials remain responsible for submitting reports required under the applicable competition and Ontario Soccer procedures. WNSC will cooperate with those processes and may assist match officials with reporting incidents.

Where an incident is referred to Ontario Soccer, a District Association or another governing body, the applicable governing organization's discipline, hearing, appeal, fine and suspension procedures will apply.

## 8. 24-HOUR RULE AND COMPLAINTS

Concerns about Club discipline decisions or non-urgent conduct matters should be addressed respectfully and in accordance with the Club's dispute resolution process. A minimum 24-hour cooling-off period should be observed before raising a non urgent complaint or disagreement. Immediate safety concerns should be reported without delay.

## 9. BOARD AUTHORITY

The WNSC Board of Directors has the authority to enforce this policy, determine appropriate Club-level disciplinary action and refer matters to governing organizations when required or appropriate.

## POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All WNSC participants, team officials, parents/guardians and spectators are expected to understand and comply with this policy. Abuse of match officials will not be tolerated.

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