

Assaults on Referees - What to Do

Assaults do happen, even to experienced referees. If such assaults are to be stamped out, referees must follow a sensible and consistent course of action that will enable the Provincial Association and the courts to punish offenders, and discourage potential offenders from acts of violence.

Many assaults occur because referees are incompetent, inconsistent, or lack game control. A referee is less likely to be assaulted if abilities are developed in a professional manner. Sometimes, assaults occur for extraneous reasons that have little or nothing to do with the referee. Nevertheless, there is never any excuse for an assault, and notwithstanding whether the referee has had a "good" game or a "bad" game, he or she should react to an assault in a manner that will permit administrative and enforcement agencies to do their job.

If An Assault Occurs

1. Never, never strike back, if such action can be avoided. Defend yourself as passively as possible. When a referee is struck, the majority of players and bystanders are automatically sympathetic towards him or her, even if they were previously hostile. If the referee chooses to slug it out, he or she stands to lose the support and calming influence of these people. The referee may also prejudice his or her own legal position.
2. Try to remain calm and avoid undue signs of stress. Maintain a standard of behaviour befitting a professional referee. Remember that police officers are assaulted frequently, yet they react in as controlled a manner as the situation permits, drawing on their resources of self-control to get on top of the threatening situation.
3. Get the details down on paper (when matters are under control).
 - a) Note the player's number and obtain his name, from the team captain or coach if necessary.
 - b) Abandon the game. An assault on a referee is a serious offence and almost always precludes the continuation of the match. It is only after an isolated, non-violent assault that a referee can even consider restarting the game.
 - c) If the referee decides to continue the match, send the player off in the prescribed manner, if he can still be approached. If not, advise the captain of your decision, and be prepared to abandon the game if the player is not removed completely from the scene.
4. Obtain witnesses. Consult your linesmen, if any, or any unattached bystanders. Obtain names and telephone numbers. Use other players only as a last resort. Do not be concerned about holding up the game; common assault is a criminal offence and must be treated seriously. Make notes to be sure that your subsequent report is accurate. After the game, discuss the incident with your witnesses; this is quite legal as no charges have been laid at this stage. Get your facts right.

5. Upon returning home after the game, contact (telephone) an appropriate member of your local area association executive. The association will thus be aware of the incident and will be in a position to give you immediate support and advice. You are probably still quite upset, so take all the help you can get.

6. Write a misconduct report. The report must be professional, precise, informative, not too brief, not too long, and above all, accurate. The report is sent to the B. C. Soccer Association. Copies should also be sent to your local area association, to the league under whose control the game was played, to the police department having jurisdiction over the ground in question, and to the Secretary of the BCSRA.

If you do not have the ability or facilities to write a report or to make copies, contact your local area association. That is what they are there for. The report must be mailed as soon as possible, theoretically within 48 hours. In practice, a little latitude may be allowed, especially if the referee was injured.

Submit reports within 48 hours.

Originals to: B. C. Soccer Association
1 1126 DOUGLAS ROAD
Burnaby, B. C.
V5C 4Z6

Copies to: Area Association

2 League under whose jurisdiction the game was played
3 The appropriate police department
4 Secretary, BCSRA
1126 DOUGLAS ROAD
Burnaby, B. C.
V5C 4Z6

7. Should you lay charges? To be more exact, should you lodge a complaint with the police so that they can lay charges if they feel that such action is merited? The answer is that you owe it to all referees everywhere to do this if the incident is sufficiently clear-cut. If players know that assaults may result in a criminal record, incidents of assault will decrease sharply, especially in small leagues where the word gets around quickly.

Speak to the station sergeant (by phone if necessary) and then send him a copy of your game report. (This is another reason why the report must be full and accurate.) A brief note with the report should indicate that you are lodging a complaint, and are asking him to assist you in this matter.

Usually, the police will handle everything from this point. They may, or may not, require you to have your complaint notarized by a Justice of the Peace. This is frequently not necessary. You will probably be informed of any charges that the police may lay, and you will probably be called to testify in court. In many cases, the accused person pleads guilty, especially since he has probably previously been disciplined by the Provincial Association.

Note: If the police fail to lay a charge, the referee may choose to take a civil action. In this event, it is vital that a lawyer be consulted, since the ramifications of setting out on this course are

beyond the scope of this memorandum. Furthermore, if a referee is sufficiently injured that he or she wishes to obtain damages, a lawyer should be consulted prior to laying a complaint with the police.

All of the preceding advice is merely common sense. With the exception of paragraph 7, and possibly paragraph 4, the course of action is also, to all intents and purposes, mandatory. Referees can indeed be severely disciplined for failing to report an assault, and may be reprimanded for inadequate methods in making the report.

8. In due course, the referee will receive notification from the BCSA of a hearing on the assault. At this time be sure to clearly understand the role in which you are being asked to attend as a plaintiff, as a witness, or as a defendant. If you are in doubt, contact your area association executive and they may check with the BCSRA Secretary. In cases of doubt, be guided by his advice. Keep copies of all correspondence that you receive and send out in this regard and make sure your area association also has copies. In this way, in case problems develop later, all of the relevant material will be on file.

9. The BCSA should give you written notification ten (10) days in advance of the hearing, indicating the time, date, and place. The hearing will be conducted in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section Eleven "Discipline" of the BCSA Constitution and Administrative Guide. It is your responsibility to attend this hearing, and you may wish to have another BCSRA member, usually a member of your area association executive, go with you as an observer. You may also take witnesses, up to the number indicated in the notification letter from the BCSA.

10. The findings of the hearing will be submitted to the BCSA for their approval, and notification of the punishment or clearing of the accused will be sent out.

11. Very occasionally, if the conduct of the referee during the incident has been less than what might have been expected, he or she might be charged with misconduct as a result of the hearing. It should be stressed that this is not common and can easily be avoided by the referee ensuring that conduct during the incident is beyond reproach. However, in the event that such a situation does arise, a further hearing may be convened, and again, it is the responsibility of the referee to attend. The best interests of the referee concerned will be served if the BCSRA Secretary is immediately notified of such circumstances.

12. If, as a result of any BCSA hearing, the referee is subject to any form of disciplinary action, it the referee's right to request leave to appeal to the CSA, provided:

a) such leave to appeal is made (in writing) within seven (7) days of the receipt of the decision. This leave to appeal is sent to the Secretary of the CSA, and

b) it meets the requirements laid down in Section 20 (1) (a) and (b) of the CSA Constitution. These indicate that the appeal may only involve an interpretation of the by-laws or rules of the BCSA or the CSA, or that it is based upon a decision to it. In all other cases, the decision of the BCSA shall be final and binding.

c) the leave to appeal is made only by the individual concerned and not by someone acting on his behalf. The leave to appeal shall be accompanied by all the pertinent documents and a cheque for \$100.00 to cover the appeal fee.

13. If such leave to appeal is granted by the CSA, a hearing will be conducted in accordance with the Memoranda of Recommended Procedure as outlined in Appendices A and B, pp 60-63 of the CSA Constitution. The decision of this appeals committee is final.

The Referee's Responsibility Never Ends

While it is hoped that having to become involved in the above procedures will not become necessary, it is obvious that knowing what to do and doing it properly the first time around will save the referee a great deal of grief. It will also help prevent a possible miscarriage of justice from occurring. It cannot be stressed too strongly that the referee's responsibility and professionalism do not end when leaving the field of play. In all fairness to the individual referee, other referees, and the game, the referee must not allow errors to create situations where assaults go unpunished or where referees can become discredited. It is up to each referee to remember what is expected and then to do it properly. By so doing the referee will be able to guarantee the maximum co-operation of the soccer authorities and have justice prevail.

Every referee should be fully aware of the obligations and options in cases of assault. It is hoped this memorandum will be of value in this respect.

A CHECK LIST OF THINGS TO DO

As well as the information outlined on the game Report and the Discipline report, the following points must be considered:

- | YES | NO | ITEM, including details and outcomes: |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The name of the COACH and/or MANAGER of both teams was obtained (either from the team lists or seeking out the information). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The name of any witnesses to the incident – including players in vicinity (through jersey numbers if required) – was recorded. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Assistant Referees working with me gave their accounting on separate reports. As well, my report will contain some of their comments. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I advised the Police. A file was started & the File No. is:
Name of the officer who took my statement: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I received First Aid or went the hospital. First Aid/Hospital File No. is:
Name of the person who attended me was: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | I am unable to return to work. The W.C.B./Insurance Co. was advised. |

I advised those as required on the Disciplinary Report:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | B.C. Soccer Association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | B.C.S.R.A. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | My Area Association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Additional details were asked and given to those whom I advised.
Their names are: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Critical Incident Stress debriefing was recommended/provided to me. Other details. |