

Referees,

As we get ready for another tournament weekend, I want to encourage everyone to include an important topic in your pre-match instructions with junior work teams: spectator comments, particularly with line judges.

We all hear those famous words, "Point" or "Score's wrong", directed toward the score table. We handle those accordingly, ensuring the score is correct and that parents remain calm about this. But we sometimes overlook our line judges, who are often in a closer position to hear comments directed at them personally.

There was a tournament incident last weekend that needed staff to intervene. So, please include in your pre-match discussion with line judges that if they hear rude or inappropriate comments directed toward them, they should report those to you as soon as possible. If a line judge (or any junior work team member) is noticeably upset, especially during play, you must stop the match and ask tournament staff to address the issue.

The OVR will not tolerate poor behavior by spectators, just as we do not tolerate poor behavior by participants. As we discussed in our pre-season clinics, it is often best that referees do not address spectators directly, but we also cannot ignore it. There is no situation that justifies adults yelling at, berating, or embarrassing a kid - player, work team, or otherwise. Ignoring it is "endorsing" it. The OVR and USA Volleyball have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to poor spectator behavior.

Similarly, there is a limit to what is reasonable when it comes to comments directed toward referees. We cannot be overly sensitive or have rabbit ears - "Oohs & Boos" happen to all sports officials. But when it crosses the line or becomes excessive, we must address it. Sometimes that means stopping the match; other times, it may be a notification to the tournament staff after the match. Either way, do not let it go!

Please use the Incident Report for any noteworthy occurrences: [https://www.ovr.org/forms/OVR\\_Incident\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ovr.org/forms/OVR_Incident_Report.pdf). Send the form to me and Brian Hofman ([Hofman@ovr.org](mailto:Hofman@ovr.org)).

We've started the season with several incidents already, so we're asking for your help in getting this under control before it becomes too common. I will be sending a similar note to club directors and tournament directors. Let's all get on the same page and speak from a unified position. The OVR has your back!

Thank you!!

Brian