

## Easy On The Referees

As I write this article, I am monitoring a soccer referee training class that GPSA is sponsoring in Grosse Pointe this winter. GPSA is continuously training new referees to work our association's youth games. We lose referees every year to high school graduation. But many more quit due to the difficulty of the job – despite the relatively high pay.

In order to be a good referee, you need to be confident and responsible. You also need to have a thick skin because you will hear an unbelievable amount of obnoxious criticism from the coaches and parents.

Many referees quit because of this criticism. So parents, as you watch your kids play soccer this spring, please remember the following.

- The referees are our kids. Speak to and treat them as if they were your own.
- Criticism shouted at the refs from the sidelines is unbecoming to you. Would you be proud to watch a video of yourself? Your kids are embarrassed by this behavior! The referees are human beings and will make mistakes from time-to-time. In one day, one week, or one month will the bad call matter? Keep the game in perspective.
- Remember, a call you think is wrong may be the right call after all. Parents are inherently biased and are often not even knowledgeable of the rules! Give the refs the benefit of the doubt.
- Criticism shouted at the refs from the sidelines hurts. It rattles the refs and doesn't improve his/her performance. It takes away from everyone's enjoyment of the game, especially the players.

Also, please do not complain to or correct the refs after the game. After the game and after you have calmed down, if you still have complaints, please direct them to me. Please send me an email at: [ref2k1@yahoo.com](mailto:ref2k1@yahoo.com) and include the game date, time, field and any other pertinent information. It is my job to sort out and address the complaints with the refs. Thank you for your cooperation.

Karen Ridgway, GPSA Referee Director