

# LOWER ISLAND SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## GREEN ARMBAND INITIATIVE



**ISSUE: Loss of youth officials due to verbal abuse and harassment.** Complementary to the Zero Tolerance for Ref Abuse banners and signs that were introduced in 2022. It is proposed that this initiative will contribute positively to the recruitment and retention of officials. Referee's cite harassment and abuse as one of the top reasons why they have decided to quit officiating.

**OBJECTIVE:** Reduce harassment and abuse of grassroots officials by clearly identifying them as "youth" to coaches, parents, players and league officials. Educate coaches, parents, players and league officials about the challenges youth referee's face with respect to verbal harassment and abuse while officiating LISA games.

**PROGRAM NAME:** **GREEN ARMBAND** initiative will help to reduce verbal abuse and harassment of youth officials as it clearly identifies them as grassroots officials to coaches, parents, players and league officials.

**BACKGROUND:** The idea originated in 2020 from a baseball group in Quebec that wanted to reduce the verbal abuse that was being hurled at their youth umpires from parents and coaches. Since then, the green armband program has started to “catch on” and has been adopted by many hockey association’s across several provinces.

**I am not aware of the program being used anywhere in soccer.....LISA would be the first!**

**POLICY:**

1. A green armband must be worn by any referee or assistant referee under 16 years of age.
2. The official may only stop wearing the green armband for their games on their 16th birthday.
3. The green armband is to be worn on the left arm, between the elbow and shoulder.
4. The green armband is to be worn regardless of age of players involved in the game.
5. The green armband is to be worn regardless of the competition level of the game.
6. Youth under the age of 16 are required to wear the green armband. It is mandatory and there are no opt out options.
7. A youth official may continue to wear the armband after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday if they so choose, until they reach the age of 18 as an additional psychological safety net.

**IMPLEMENTATION and NEXT STEPS:** Launch an awareness and communication campaign. Create awareness posters that can be placed in every clubhouse throughout LISA. Consult with LISA board members, club Presidents and club referee coordinators. Post the information on both the LISA social media sites and all club websites.

**COSTS:** \$6.50 per armband with LISA logo + \$18.50 each for creation of 12” x 18” awareness sign boards. To be funded by LISA Referee Development fund.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** effective the start of the 2023/24 season, officials under the age of 16, who are often in just their first or second year of refereeing, will be wearing green armbands, which is part of a new LISA initiative. The intention is to let everybody know that we've got rookies out there who are young referee's who are just doing their job and trying to get better as they go along.

**PLEASE HELP US STOP HARRASSMENT & VERBAL ABUSE OF OUR YOUTH SOCCER OFFICIALS!**

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