

Shippensburg Soccer Club Code of Conduct

Expectations for Players and Families

The purpose of SSC is to foster and promote the game of soccer on the youth level and to foster the physical, mental and emotional growth of youth in our area through the sport of soccer. The following are helpful reminders and yes, expectations, for all who are affiliated with SSC in any way as we approach the game of soccer. Please feel free to discuss the contents of this document with your coaches or any member of the Executive Board. It is expected that each prospective player and parent/guardian will read this statement prior to having a family discussion about its contents. It is very important that parents/guardians and players understand and agree with the mission, values, and expectations outlined within this document as well as the Bylaws and Standing Rules prior to making a commitment to SSC. These documents are all available on the SSC website.

Perspective: Soccer is not larger than life – it is only a game. Players should not be expected to live out the goals or aspirations of the parent/guardians. If a player's performance produces strong emotions in the parent/guardian, please control them. Remember that the relationship between a player and his or her parent/guardian will continue long after his or her competitive soccer days are over. In that vein, players should receive unconditional support as he or she should never have to perform at a certain level to justify love.

Priorities: The number one priority in life for the players should not be soccer. There are other important priorities such as academics, community, family, religion, and the arts that need emphasis. The key is balance. But we expect soccer to be one of the priorities and thus we expect our players to show dedication, positive attitudes, commitment, teamwork, and strong work ethic.

Team: It is important to support and root for all players on the team. We want to foster teamwork and teach the players that we win or lose as a team. Thus, the accomplishments of all the players should be celebrated in the same manner. The ideal team is one where everyone performs a role and there are no stars. It is of concern when parents/guardians only cheer for their child or even worse, when they criticize the teammates. Such behavior is not helpful to the team or to a particular player.

Communication: If a player is having difficulties in practice or games, or can't make a practice, etc., he or she should speak directly to the coaches. This encourages him or her to develop responsibility and is part of learning communication skills. When conflicts between teammates occur, they should be resolved within the team via individual mediations or by holding team meetings. Parents/guardians should only become involved in conflict resolution as a last resort.

Focus: To perform to the best of his or her abilities, a player needs to focus on the parts of the game that can be controlled (fitness, positioning, decision-making, skill, and aggressiveness). If he or she starts focusing on what cannot be controlled (field conditions, the referee, the weather, or the opponent), he or she will not play up to his or her ability. Thus hearing people in the crowd telling him or her what to do or hearing them yelling at the referee diverts attention away from the task at hand. Parents/guardians should feel free to cheer the team, but they should not engage in coaching their child during the game nor should they direct comments to the referee, as these are the exclusive roles of the coaches.

Competition: Competition is not bad in and of itself. Rather, it is our response to competitive situations that is crucial. The old saying, "It is not if you win or lose but how you play the game," must serve as a guiding principle. Thus if a player comes off the field after a loss, but he or she played at their best, we want him or her to see the positives of the situation. Remind the player to focus on the "process of the game" and not the "results of the game." The real fun and satisfaction should come from "striving to win." Sportsmanship is also important in that we must congratulate the other team, our teammates, and the referee regardless of whether we win or lose. To cast blame is unacceptable and does not teach the players about the game or about life.

Membership: A player who is selected to play on an SSC U9 or older team is generally expected to make a commitment for one year (August 1 – July 31). As such, players are expected to play in both the fall and spring outdoor seasons. Once selected, a player is only considered a member of SSC for one year and their membership is not automatically renewed. U8 and younger players may join for just one season at a time. Players may be removed from the SSC during their period of membership following the recommendation of the appropriate Head Coach with Executive Board approval.

(OVER)

Playing Time: Playing time is not guaranteed for U13 and older players. For U9-U12 teams all players shall play at least one quarter of each game. At younger age groups, coaches will strive to play every player more than this minimum. Players can only improve if they play. Playing time beyond the minimum is at the coach’s discretion and it should be expected that not all players will play equal amounts of time. All U8 and younger players will have approximately equal playing time.

Commitment: During the period of membership, players agree to play for only SSC sanctioned soccer teams under the leadership of approved SSC coaches. They may not play for other soccer teams, for other coaches, or in any other type of soccer league without the formal permission of the SSC Executive Board. Players are assigned to a specific SSC team by the Executive Board and that assignment shall generally remain in effect for the year or until such time as the Executive Board changes the assignment.

Coaching: The coaches are entrusted with the responsibility to manage the team. Thus in order to be effective, they must be free to implement motivational strategies, set team goals, develop strategy, conduct training, determine playing time, perform substitutions, and implement discipline. The bottom line for everyone, please leave the coaching to the coaches. This does not mean that parents/guardians or players should not communicate with the coaches. Quite the opposite, players and parents/guardians should establish a relationship with the coaches and seek feedback from them. All coaches should be able to provide team and individual assessments. However, coaches should be treated with courtesy and respect and their decisions should be supported once they provide rationale. It is not productive for anyone when coaches are criticized without ever talking with them in a courteous and open manner. It is also important that players and parents/guardians only represent their issues and not the issues of others when talking to the coaches. If a majority of the players and parents/guardians believe the coaches are not responding properly to their concerns, they are expected to contact a member of the SSC Executive Board.

Support: For the parents, there are many ways to support the Shippensburg Soccer Club and your child. First, consider getting involved. We always need help with fundraising, field maintenance, etc. Second, make sure your child is getting adequate sleep and proper nutrition. Third, keep an eye on your child to make sure they are handling stress effectively. Fourth, please do not attempt to motivate your child by offering them incentives. It is the coaches’ role to motivate the players. Finally, is your child having fun? We are trying to challenge your child to push beyond their “comfort level” and improve himself or herself as a player and as a person. Hopefully we will do this in an environment that is fun yet challenging.

Conduct: Shippensburg Soccer Club Players, Parents, Guardians, Spectators, and Volunteers need to maintain order at all Shippensburg Soccer Club activities. Any verbal or physical violations will be dealt with by the Executive Board according to Article X of the SSC Bylaws.

We have read the aforementioned, discussed the contents, and agree to fulfill the mission, values, and expectations as outlined. We also understand that it shall be considered a privilege to be a player for the Shippensburg Soccer Club and thus our failure to uphold the tenets of this document may result in the player’s membership being terminated. We further understand that we will incur financial obligations associated with playing for the SSC and we agree to fulfill these obligations in a prompt manner. We also agree to participate in fund raising activities should that become necessary. Finally, we understand that no money will be refunded if a player resigns, quits, or has his or her membership terminated. Please refer to the SSC Bylaws and Standing Rules for further clarification on the ideas expressed in this document.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Player Signature

Date

Photographs of our child during SSC activities are allowed to appear in SSC publications such as webpages or advertisements. Please verbally let a board member know if you do NOT sign below.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date