

Massachusetts Youth Soccer

Parent's/Guardian's/Spectator's Code of Conduct

Watching our children play any sport can be rewarding. We have the opportunity to observe them develop technical and physical skills (dribbling, shooting, passing), learn what sportsmanship and teamwork are all about, understand how to act and react when winning and losing, and overall become more well-rounded people who ultimately learn how to treat all others with respect and dignity.

We all should be proud of how well our children do as they learn and grow through soccer. Yet, as many of you may know, inappropriate conduct by parents and other spectators has become an increasing problem for youth sports organizations. To deal with this problem in an effective manner, Massachusetts Youth Soccer and all member organizations will implement this Parents'/Guardian's/Spectator's Code of Conduct which is detailed below. The Massachusetts Youth Soccer Board of Directors urges all of you to take these policies to heart so that we will all have a safe, enjoyable and successful season.

PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S/SPECTATOR'S CODE OF CONDUCT

BE SUPPORTIVE

1. Do not force your child to participate in sports. Children play sports to have fun, make new friends, and learn new skills.
2. Applaud good plays; don't dwell on bad plays.
3. Stress fair and sensible play. Soccer is a contact sport, let the officials determine fair or foul play.
4. Promote the long-term importance of practice over the short-term excitement of matches.
5. Promote the importance of teamwork.
6. Mistakes are a part of the learning process for everyone. Positive reinforcement goes a long way.
7. Remember that coaches and administrators are usually volunteers. A "thank you" every once in a while, is often a nice reward.

DO NOT DISTRACT

8. Children imitate their parents. If you are disruptive or act inappropriately, your child, and possibly others, will act in a similar fashion. Remember that you are a role model.
9. The sidelines are not a place to shout personal instructions. Encouragement from the sidelines is appreciated; coaching from the spectator sidelines is forbidden. A good rule to follow when you cheer/yell/shout from the sidelines is, "No verbs!" (Instead of yelling shoot, pass or run faster, praise effort,

- good sportsmanship and creative play).
10. Respect the coach's decision and abilities. Don't force your child to decide whether to listen to you or to the coach.
 11. The other team is the opponent, not the enemy. Treat all with respect.
 12. Take time to learn the rules of the match and the policies of the town, club, and competition authority.

HOSTILITY IS FORBIDDEN

13. Do not direct any instructions or negative comments to the opponent team's players or their spectators.
14. The use of obscene, vulgar, racial, or derogatory language, including any slurs or offensive terms, is prohibited.
15. Taunting players, coaches, officials, or other spectators by means of baiting, ridiculing, threat of physical violence, or actual violence either in person, electronically, or via social media is prohibited.
16. Throwing of any object in the spectators' viewing area, players' area, playing fields, or parking areas, directed in any manner in order to intimidate or harm another person or that may create a safety hazard is prohibited.
17. If you see or are subjected to misconduct, follow proper reporting procedures. If warranted (racial slurs, derogatory language, or physical misconduct outside of normal game contact determined by the referee), notify the coach as soon as there is an opportunity and, in a calm, and nonconfrontational manner.
18. Review U.S. Soccer's 531-9 policy which specifically speaks to misconduct toward a referee and penalties imposed for violations of the policy. Mass Youth Soccer has extended this policy to include spectators.

Spectators who don't follow the expectations described above will be disciplined or removed. Any sanctions will be in line with all applicable misconduct policies. The main reference for sanctions can be found in the Reporting, Response, and Resolution Matrices document. Additionally, violations for misconduct toward a referee by a spectator will be addressed in accordance with the US Soccer 531-9 penalty matrix, which Mass Youth Soccer has specifically extended to include spectators.

All individuals associated with Mass Youth Soccer are expected to understand and comply with the Mass Youth Soccer Safe Soccer Policies in accordance with U.S. Soccer and the U.S. Center for Safe Sport requirements, and other, similar guidance in force and adopted from time to time.

Match referees, officials and administration have been instructed to stop play when parents, guardians, or spectators display inappropriate or disruptive behavior that interferes with coaches, players, or other spectators during the match. Referees or club/league officials will identify violators to the coaches for the purpose of removing the violators from the spectators' viewing and match area. Once removed, play will resume.

Lost time will not be replaced, and violators may be subject to further disciplinary action or local civil and criminal statutes. Inappropriate and disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to, the actions listed in the Hostile and Forbidden section of this document.

