



LAVALE SOCCER CLUB HANDBOOK

1. GENERAL GUIDELINES

1.1. MISSION STATEMENT

1.1.1. LaVale Soccer Club is a recreational club, with our focus on the educational aspect of youth soccer programs that develop good character; mental and physical fitness; and interpersonal communication skills through soccer activities. Sportsmanship, social skills, and self-esteem are developed by players through regular interaction with other players and coaches.

1.1.2. LaVale Soccer Club is a family centered environment that focuses on individual growth. All players and parents are members of the Club, and this takes precedence over membership on their individual teams. We ask all of our members to keep this in mind, as they participate in LaVale Soccer Club activities and events. We need to be supportive of all members and teams, not just the teams on which our children participate. Similarly, the Board must act in the best interests of the Club as a whole, and not specific teams or players. We all share in the Club's success.

1.2. CORE VALUES

1.2.1. All parents want their children to excel and succeed. What we all need to come to terms with is what that looks like and how it is measured.

1.2.2. LaVale Soccer Club strongly holds that the measure of achievement must change from goals scored and games or tournaments won; to how much an individual child has improved over the course of a season.

1.2.3. Goals scored and games or tournaments won focuses on the "All Star" player(s), the coach, the team and the club; and ignores the majority of the individual players. Each child on a team develops at different rates emotionally, physically, psychologically,

tactically and technically. Coaches and parents should never compare one player to another. Club administrators should never favor a specific individual or a specific team within the Club.

- 1.2.4. Youth players are not mini-adults: Coaches need to understand that they are teaching children and adolescents. Each age group has different abilities and characteristics, which dictates how to communicate with and teach them. At all age groups, competition, not winning, is what is most important. While learning how to compete and winning or losing all have their place, acquiring long-term skills and learning life lessons should be the top priority. Since all players develop at different rates, training is not just for those who are the most advanced for their age, the more athletic, or the ones most committed to soccer. It is essential that we set individual challenges before each player.
- 1.2.5. Soccer is meant to be fun and educational, and not just competitive: This is especially true at the younger levels, ages 3-8, and should remain the dominant perspective through preteen and teenage years. The implications of this distinction between educational and competitive approaches are profound.
- 1.2.6. In the overall development of our youth, soccer must be kept in perspective. Children should play because they want to, not because they feel forced. If so desired, children should be allowed to take off-season breaks, try other sports, or go to summer camps of their choosing. Nothing should be assumed by anyone involved. Good communication between parents and their child as well as between parent, child, and coach to assess how the player feels about their participation and progress is always beneficial.

1.3. INTRODUCTION TO LAVALE SOCCER

- 1.3.1. The LaVale Soccer Club is a volunteer-run recreational soccer league, located primarily in Allegany County in Western Maryland, includes some surrounding school districts and is a member of the LaVale Athletic Association. LaVale Soccer Club is designed to give our players a safe and fun place to enjoy the game of soccer. We place an emphasis on the fundamentals of soccer, teamwork, and good sportsmanship.
- 1.3.2. LaVale Soccer Club currently offers youth soccer programs for youth from Prekindergarten to 8th grade in the following player divisions: Academy, 6U, 8U, 10U, 12U, and 15U. The cost of registration is \$65 for academy and \$75 for regular season. A child must play in their designated age group. We allow children to move into the next age group early if A: The parents sign an insurance waiver B: The child has already played in the previous age group with LaVale Soccer Club (i.e. A child must play 1 year at 8U before playing up in 10U). No other league experience will be accepted.
- 1.3.3. Our primary fields are currently located at the Haley House Field on Holly Ave, Ort Family Field, Cash Valley Field, Lions Field in LaVale, with additional fields as needed in the surrounding area.

2. LaVale Soccer Club Board Breakdown

- 2.1.1. Director- Rick Stevenson – This position entails the coordination of all board members, executive decision making, financial oversight, assisting all other board members with tasks as needed, business decisions, parent/coach/ref issues, and any other tasks that develop over time. The Director shall preside at all meetings of this organization and shall

have general supervision and direction of all affairs. The Director will sign with the Treasurer any contracts, obligations or other instruments which need authorized to be executed. The Director has the authority to temporarily suspend coaches and/or players within five days of a reported infraction, until heard by the Disciplinary Committee.

- 2.1.2. Assistant Director – John Robinson- This position entails all aspects of the Director 's position, assisting with other board members' tasks, and filling in for the Director in an absence. The Assistant Director will also be the Chair of any subcommittees that are formed. The Assistant Director will have voting rights unless they are acting as the Director.
- 2.1.3. Treasurer – Travis Beeman –The Treasurer shall keep a correct record of receipts and expenditures, and shall request payout funds by check through LaVale Athletic Association as authorized. The Treasurer shall present an accurate statement of account at every meeting of the organization.
- 2.1.4. Secretary – Vacant - This position is responsible for taking notes at all LSC functions as well as creating and distributing meeting minutes and agendas for all meetings that take place and uploading documents to the Google Drive.
- 2.1.5. Field & Equipment Director – Dustin Wilder- This position will be in charge of keeping an accurate inventory of all Club equipment and ordering new equipment as necessary. This position will be responsible for organizing a committee to layout the fields at the beginning of each season as well as overseeing the upkeep and maintenance of the fields.
- 2.1.6. Referee Director –Matt Bernard - This position will be in charge of coordinating the training for referees, to include background checks and volunteer registration forms. Will serve as the referees contact throughout the season, create a referee schedule and facilitate the payment of fees to referees.
- 2.1.7. Schedule & Coach Director- Rick Stevenson - This position is responsible for ensuring that coaches have all of the resources and training that they need to be successful. As the Coach Director they also serve as the main point of contact for any issues that coaches cannot resolve on their own. This position is responsible for ensuring that all coaches have completed mandatory training and attend coaching clinics.
- 2.1.8. Sponsorship Director – Jason D'Atri - This position is in charge of contacting potential sponsors, relaying information to the sponsors, collecting sponsor payments and photo files for advertising. When allowed the Sponsorship Director will assist in procuring sponsorship signage to be placed at the playing fields, as well as sending out thank you notes at the end of the season with a team photo.
- 2.1.9. Graphic Design and Uniform Director - John Robinson- This position is in charge of coordinating jersey orders, fan gear, and any other fundraising orders, as well as creating graphics.
- 2.1.10. Social Media & PR Director- Vacant - This position is in charge of updating and creating Social Media, Website, and emails to promote the best interest of the club. In turn this position will oftentimes assist the Schedule and Coach Director in answering questions from parents and coaches. This position is responsible to ensure that injuries that occur during games and training.

- 2.1.11. Fundraising Director – Brittany D’Atri- This position is in charge of coordinating fundraisers and distributing fundraising materials and information. Additional responsibilities are to coordinate and schedule team pictures.
- 2.1.12. Executive Assistant-Jason Karpa- This position is a general volunteer, which can assist with any of the above. This position also carries the ability to vote on board related items.
- 2.1.13. Safety Director - Vacant - This position is responsible for obtaining materials and stocking field houses/sheds with first aid and safety equipment. This person should also be familiar with the process of submitting claims in case of injury and following up with players and families in that situation
- 2.1.14 Registrar-Rebecca Karpa. The registrar will take point on all matters of registrations, record keeping, and data entry on player and volunteer registrations. The registrar is responsible for creating/editing/maintaining the season registration set-up and submitting rosters to MSYSA as well as ensuring all necessary COI’s are up to date and filed.
- 2.1.15. ALL BOARD MEMBERS HAVE VOTING POWER ON ANYTHING THAT IS BROUGHT TO A VOTE.
- 2.1.16. Majority will rule on all votes. Director does not cast an official vote and will only cast a vote in event of a tie.
- 2.1.17. The Disciplinary Committee will comprise at a minimum 2/3 of the active board member positions and will be responsible for hearing cases involving temporary or permanent suspension of coaches, players, parents, and fellow board members for actions detrimental to the values of the LaVale Soccer Club. All affected parties shall be heard within 5 days of the suspension by the Director or Assistant Director. All decisions are final.
- 2.1.18. An active Board Member is defined as a Board member currently serving in one of the 13 voting positions and not involved in the matter being voted on in the Disciplinary Committee.
- 2.1.19. To remain an active Board Member in good standing a board member must proficiently perform their listed duties and make adequate effort to attend scheduled meetings.

3. General Rules of Play

3.1. Equal Playing Time

- 3.1.1. Each player MUST play at least half of the game.
 - 3.1.2. For 6U, 8U and 10U it is STRONGLY ENCOURAGED that every player play multiple positions during the course of one game.
 - 3.1.3. Substitutions are encouraged to be made at the end of a quarter for 6U and 8U, unless an injury/medical reason should arise. If there is an official present, he/she will have the final say for non-end of quarter substitutions. Regular substitution rules apply for 10U, 12U and 15U.
 - 3.1.4 Players must play in the division in which they are rostered.
- 3.2. FIFA rules of the game must also be followed at ALL age levels. They can be found on our website at: <https://www.lavalesoccerclub.com>

3.2.1. There will be no heading of the ball during practice or in a game except in the 12U and 15U age groups by players who are 11 years of age and older and have been taught how to properly perform a head ball.

3.2.2. **There is no slide tackling at any level.** This does not include sliding after a loose ball or in front of a goal face. A slide tackle is defined as an attempt to steal a ball from the controlling player while leaving your feet.

3.3. Safety

3.3.1.

All volunteers must clear federal background checks, and concussion training. **Only should be** All play **volunteers with background checks can be on the same sideline as the players.** **suspended for 30 minutes after every lightning/thunder event.**

3.3.2

3.3.3. If a player is injured during the course of a game, then a first report of injury form must be filled out by the coach and turned into the Safety Director.

3.3.4. If a player is removed from a game for a possible concussion or other serious injury, they must have a doctor's note turned into the Safety Director clearing them to resume physical activity.

3.4. Time Keeping

3.4.1. The clock will run continuously at every age group, unless there is an injury. The clock may be stopped briefly at the ACADEMY, 6U, and 8U age level for Coaches instructions.

4. Sportsmanship

4.1. We place an emphasis on this as a league. We encourage positive interaction from coaches, players, and fans at all times while involved in any LaVale Soccer Club activities.

4.1.1. Coaches

4.1.1.1. You are an extension of the LaVale Soccer Club, and while involved in any soccer activities, you must follow all guidelines and set an example for players and fans. We expect you to maintain your composure, and show everyone around you what good sportsmanship looks like.

4.1.1.2. **It is unacceptable to run the score up on an opponent. This is a zero-tolerance policy. If a team is ever ahead by 8 goals, then the scoring team must remove a player from the field.** In 6U, 8U, and 10U it is highly discouraged for any player to score more than 5 goals. It is recommended, if a player has scored more than 5 goals that they be put in a defensive position for that game.

4.1.1.3. Failure to follow the guidelines for sportsmanship could result in a forfeiture of games, or removal as a coach.

4.1.1.4. **No more than 2 coaches are permitted on the sidelines during a game. Additional coaches are expected to sit on the spectator side and to act as a spectator. NO COACHING from the spectator side.**

5. AGE GROUPS

- 5.1. For a child to be able to register, they must be within the published birth years of the current registration period.
- 5.2. Each team will have if possible a minimum of 2 Coaches to share team responsibilities. LaVale Soccer Club will pay for all background checks of these coaches. If the board feels that a team needs an additional coach due to a medical condition or other circumstance requiring extra help, LaVale Soccer Club will appoint an additional coach and cover their background check.

5.3. ACADEMY (3 and 4 year olds)

- 5.3.1. This division will focus on the basics of the game. This division will play 4 players per side. Games will consist of 4 quarters lasting 6 minutes a piece, with a small break between quarters and a 5-minute halftime break, using a size 3 ball. Coaches will officiate the game, stopping play for out of bounds, hands balls, fouls etc. Second chances should be given for all throw-ins and light enforcement of handballs. See the FIFA rules of the game for restarting after a ball goes out of play, fouls, and starting play. There is no goal keeper at this age.

5.4. 6U (5 and 6 year olds)

- 5.4.1. This division will focus on the basics of the game. This division will play 4 players per side. Games will consist of 4 quarters lasting 6 minutes a piece, with a small break between quarters and a 5-minute halftime break, using a size 3 ball. Coaches will officiate the game, stopping play for out of bounds, hands balls, fouls etc. Second chances should be given for all throw-ins and light enforcement of handballs. See the FIFA rules of the game for restarting after a ball goes out of play, fouls, and starting play. There is no goal keeper at this age.

5.5. 8U (7 and 8 year olds)

- 5.5.1. This division will focus on the basics of the game, with an introduction to positional play and advanced fundamental skill. This division will play 6 players a side, 5 on the field and Goal Keeper. Games will consist of 4 quarters lasting 8 minutes a piece, with a small break in between quarters and a 5 minutes half time break, using a size 3 ball. Coaches will officiate the game, stopping play for out of bounds, hands balls, fouls etc. See the FIFA rules of the game for restarting after a ball out of play, fouls, and starting play. Second chances should be given for throw-ins and light enforcement of hand balls. There is a goal keeper at this age.

5.6. 10U (9 and 10 year olds)

- 5.6.1. This division will focus on advanced aspects of the core fundamentals of soccer, as well as the incorporation of team play, advanced positioning, and the introduction of the goal keeper position. This division will have 7 players a side (including the goal keeper). This division will play 10-minute quarters, with a short break between quarters, and a 5-minute half time, using a size 4 ball. There will be no second chances on throw-ins or hand balls. A referee will be provided, if a referee is unavailable the coaches will assume the responsibilities of the referee. The referee will keep the time on the field and will have

ultimate authority over the game, this means that there will be no yelling or arguing with the referee. Any issues with a referee should be discussed with the Referee Director. A goal keeper possessed ball may not be drop-kicked, punted or thrown past midfield. The result will be an indirect kick by the opposing team at midfield. A live ball played on the ground to the goal keeper feet may cross midfield. Once a goal keeper has possession of the ball, the opposing team must provide 10 yards to allow the goal keeper to release the ball. A ball is considered live once a goal keeper lets a ball bounce 2 times or places it on the ground to be played by his/her feet. Soft offside calls will be called if the player is extremely in front of the defense or cherry picking. Also, penalty kicks are introduced in this age group.

5.7. 12U (11 and 12 year olds)

5.7.1. This age group will focus on the advanced development of team play, advanced fundamental teaching, and goal keeper development. This division will play 9 players a side (including a goal keeper). This division will play 2, 25 minute halves and a 5 to 10 minute halftime break, using a size 4 ball. A referee will be provided, if a referee is unavailable the coaches will assume the responsibilities of the referee. The referee will keep the time on the field and will have ultimate authority over the game. This means that there will be no yelling or arguing with the referee. Any issues with a referee should be discussed with the Referee Director. There will be no second chances on throw-ins or hand balls. Enforcement for offside calls is enforced at this level. There will be no extra time, this means games can end in a tie.

5.8. 15U (13, 14, and 15 year olds)

5.8.1. This age group will focus on the advancement of embedded fundamentals with the introduction to advanced techniques and set pieces. This division will have 11 players a side including a goal keeper, if teams cannot field 11 players then 9v9 is an acceptable format. This division will play 30 minute halves with a 10-minute half time break, using a size 5 ball. A referee will be provided, if a referee is unavailable the coaches will assume the responsibilities of the referee. The referee will keep the time on the field and will have ultimate authority over the game. This means that there will be no yelling or arguing with the referee. Any issues with a referee should be discussed with the Referee Director. There will be no second chances on throw-ins or hand balls. Enforcement for offside calls will be strictly enforced at this level. There will be no extra time, this means games can end in a tie.

5.9. 18U (16, 17, and 18 year olds) – when registration numbers allow

5.9.1. This age group will not be co-ed. Team size and field size will be determined by registration numbers. This age will focus on the advancement of embedded fundamentals with the introduction to advanced techniques and set pieces. This division will play max 40 minute halves with a 10-minute half time break, using a size 5 ball. A referee will be provided, if a referee is unavailable the coaches will assume the responsibilities of the referee. The referee will keep the time on the field and will have ultimate authority over the game. This means that there will be no yelling or arguing with the referee. Any issues with a referee

should be discussed with the Referee Director. There will be no second chances on throw-ins or hand balls. Enforcement for offside calls will be strictly enforced at this level. There will be no extra time, this means games can end in a tie.

Games will only be canceled in the event of weather in the event of a rainout as determined by either the LSC Board or by the referee assigned to that game. Makeup games can be played

5.9

during scheduled practices. Be sure to communicate to all other coaches in your division on changes of game schedules via email and or group text messages with that age group. All group messages should include all coaches in that age group, the Schedule and Coach Director, as well as the Referee Director. All Make up games will be coordinated by the LSC Board.

5.10 Games will not be canceled due to personal schedule conflicts of coaches or players. In the event that a team does not have enough players to field the appropriate amount for that age group, they can play short in order to allow the kids to play the game. If a team is unable to field a coach for a game please advise the Schedule and Coach Director as soon as possible and we will find an available Coach to coach your game for you.

5.11 Parents and fans must be on the opposite side of the field from the players during all practices and games. This is an insurance requirement and for the safety of the players. No spectators may be at the end lines, this is a FIFA rule.

5.12 Referees are the final authority for all game time situations. Players, coaches and parents should be respectful of the referees and keep in mind the vast majority of our referees are still children or young adults themselves, so behave accordingly.

6. REFEREES

6.1 Referees must check the field and all player equipment before starting play. Every player must have cleats, shin guards (under the sock), and no jewelry. You must arrive no less than 20 minutes before a game starts. Referees are responsible for keeping good order and fair play during each game, and infringement that results in a yellow, or red card must be reported to the Referee Director at the conclusion of the game. Pay rates are 25\$ per referee per game. If a referee must ref a game alone, they will be paid \$37.50.

7. BEHAVIOR AND CONDUCT

7.1 The following are zero tolerance:

- 7.1.1 NO smoking/e-cigs/ other tobacco products.
- 7.1.2 NO foul language.
- 7.1.3 NO pets within 30 yards of ANY playing surface. They must remain in the parking area (unless approved by the Safety Director) Trained service animals are always welcome provided they have the proper vaccinations and city licenses.
- 7.1.4 NO arguing with coaches, referees or spectators.

- 7.1.5 NO entering the field of play unless you have been background checked or asked to enter the field of play due to injury or another emergency.
- 7.1.6 No alcoholic beverages.
- 7.2 Coaches shall be responsible for the conduct of their players while they are at the game field. Improper conduct on the part of players, coaches, or spectators may result in penalties, expulsion, suspension, or in extreme cases forfeiture of the game as decided by the Disciplinary Committee.
- 7.3 Any player or coach receiving a yellow card or red card must be reported to the Referee Director by each coach and referee. Said player/players receiving a red card shall have to sit out of the next game at which the player/players is present. If that person is a coach, then he/she cannot communicate with the players or assistant coaches during the game in which they received the red card or the following game. The coach will be allowed to watch their team play from a distance at which they are able to view the game but unable to coach from.
- 7.4 Inappropriate conduct by any fan or coach shall be reported to the Schedule and Coach Director within 24 hours and recorded in a written statement. The complaint should include a record of the names of the individuals involved. The Schedule and Coach Director will then forward the information onto the Director who will form a Disciplinary Committee for appropriate action, which could include suspension or expulsion of the offending individual. If a complaint is discussed at the meeting, the written statements need to be made available at the Disciplinary Committee meeting.
- 7.5 Any violation of the above rules and regulations will be dealt with on a case by case basis. Once a determination has been made on a violation, there will be an appeal process that will include an executive board hearing (100% of active board members). Any appeals must be delivered in writing to the Director no more than 10 days after a determination by the Disciplinary Committee. At that time, a hearing time and place will be determined if necessary and all parties will be invited to make a formal appeal of their case.
- 7.6 These rules are not all encompassing and can be added to at the discretion of the LaVale Soccer Club Board members.

8. MISCELLANEOUS

- 8.1 Team information, coach contact information, schedules, and sponsorship information can be found at www.lavalesoccerclub.com
- 8.2 We also have Facebook www.facebook.com/lavalesoccerclub and Instagram @lavalesoccerclub pages. This is the great place to find information as to what is going on with current events within the Club.

9. AFFILIATIONS

- 9.1 LaVale Soccer Club is an affiliate member of the LaVale Athletic Association and agrees to pay a \$20 per year field usage agreement for all players playing on LAA managed fields.
- 9.2 LaVale Soccer Club agrees to abide by all rules, policies, and regulations of MSYSA, US Youth Soccer, and US Soccer.

9.3 LaVale Soccer Club will register all players, coaches, and teams who participate in the organization's programs with MSYSA and other US Soccer members at least annually and pay the appropriate registration fees to comply with US Soccer's 100% affiliation rule.

10. The above handbook and MSYSA Policy addendum has been approved by the LaVale Soccer Club Board on 11/09/2023.

To help prevent verbal abuse and physical assault in the leagues and clubs within the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA, or Association); the Association has adopted a ZERO TOLERANCE



Behavior Expectation Policy

POLICY for our ZERO ABUSE initiative. This Behavior Expectation Policy builds upon the Zero Tolerance Policy and applies to all coaches, players, managers, club team officials, parents, volunteers, spectators and other supporters and referees.

Abusive and obscene language, violent conduct, fighting and other behavior (including, but not limited to sarcasm, taunting, etc.) deemed detrimental to the game between the above-mentioned groups will not be tolerated.

The ultimate responsibility for the actions of coaches, players, and spectators resides with the member clubs.

MSYSA is and will always be, a place where all races, genders, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and other protected categories can come together and feel welcome to enjoy the game of soccer, compete, and grow together. Our organization maintains the highest standards and all our players, parents, and coaches are expected to demonstrate the utmost level of respect and sportsmanship.

The use of racial epithets and offensive language has no place in MSYSA. Use of racial epithets and other offensive language is especially harmful for members of underrepresented groups. Permitting such language is incongruous to the culture of respect, dignity, and belonging we strive to create for all athletes, staff, and volunteers who support our youth.

It is the responsibility of the coaches to provide referee support and spectator control, and it is the responsibility of the member clubs to provide instructions to their coaches on how they are expected to carry this out. This policy applies before, during, and after the game at the soccer field and its immediate surrounding areas.

Parents & Spectators

No parent or spectator shall persistently address the referee or assistant referees at any time. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Parents and spectators shall not dispute calls during or after the game.
- b. Parents and spectators shall not make remarks to the referee(s) or advise the referee(s) to watch certain players or attend to rough play.
- c. Parents and spectators shall never yell at the referee(s), including criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, or feedback of any kind before, during or after the game.

Allowable exceptions to the above include, but may not be limited to:

- a. Parents and spectators may respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation, until such time as the referee terminates the conversation.
- b. Parents and spectators may point out an emergency or safety issue, such as a player apparently injured on the field or observed fighting.

Additionally, parents and spectators shall not make derogatory comments to the players nor to the team officials of either team.

Penalties (Parents & Spectators)

In the opinion of the referee, depending on the severity of the offense, the referee may take any of the following actions:

- a. The referee may issue a verbal warning to the head coach of the offending party's team.
- b. The referee may caution (yellow card) the head coach of the offending party's team.
- c. The referee may send off (red card) the head coach of the offending party's team.
- d. The referee may stop the game and instruct the head coaches to direct the parent/spectator to leave the field.
- e. The referee may abandon the game if the parent/spectator does not leave the field.

The sanction for irresponsible behavior by a spectator will be administered by the referee to the head coach in accordance with Law 12, Disciplinary Action, Team Officials. Examples:

Warning:

- 1) Ignoring a request from an AR to move away from the touchline.
- 2) Non-exaggerated disagreement about referee or AR decisions

Caution (Yellow Card):

- 1) Clear or continual disagreement or complaining about referee or AR decisions
- 2) Gesturing or verbal demand for yellow or red card
- 3) Acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner

Send-Off (Red Card):

- 1) Confronting the other team's spectators
- 2) Throwing or kicking an object onto the field
- 3) Offensive, Insulting or Abusive language or actions
- 4) Violent Conduct
- 5) Entering the field of play for any reason without being invited by the referee
- 6) Physical or aggressive behavior including spitting

IF A SEND-OFF (RED CARD) OFFENSE BY A SPECTATOR OCCURS AFTER THE GAME ENDS, THE HEAD COACH MAY STILL BE SANCTIONED BY THE REFEREE.

Players

The conduct of the players is governed by the Laws of the Game as stated by FIFA and USSF. The Laws themselves describe penalties associated with violating the Laws of the Game. Additional penalties for players who engage in misconduct may be established by the club and/or league but may in no case be less severe than penalties established by FIFA, USSF, or MSYSA.

Coaches, Assistant Coaches & Bench Personnel

It is the responsibility of all coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players, and supporters in all matches. Failure to do so undermines the referee's authority and the integrity of the game resulting in an unfavorable sporting environment for players, the referee(s), coaches, assistant coaches, bench personnel, and spectators. As role models for all the participants and spectators, coaches participating in a Maryland State Youth Soccer Association sanctioned event are expected to be supportive of, and to acknowledge the effort, good play, and sportsmanship on the part of ALL players from either team in a contest. By example, coaches, assistant coaches, and bench personnel are expected to show that although they are competing in a game, they have respect for their opponent, referees, and spectators at all times. The Maryland State Youth Soccer Association will not tolerate negative behavior exhibited either by demonstrative actions and gestures, or by illintentioned remarks, including those addressed toward the referees or members of an opposing team.

Coaches exhibiting hostile, negative, sarcastic, or otherwise ill-intended behavior toward referees, opposing players or coaches will be subject to sanction by the referee. Additional sanctions may be imposed by the club that the coach or assistant coach represents, the league that the match is being played under, or as allowed by the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association policies after a review of the match report.

Coaches should be aware that according to the laws of the game any person in the technical area can be shown cards by the referee.

- Coaches shall not interact directly or indirectly with the coaches or players of the opposing team during the game in any manner that may be construed as negative, hostile, or sarcastic either by way of demonstrative actions and gestures or by ill- intentioned remarks.
- Coaches shall not offer dissent to any call made by the referee(s) at any time.
- Coaches are not to address the Referee(s) during the game except to:
 - a. Respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation.
 - b. Point out emergency or safety issues.
 - c. Make substitutions.

- d. Ask the referee, "What is the proper restart (i.e., direction and Indirect Free Kick or Direct Free Kick)?"
- e. Ask for the time remaining in the half.
- Coaches are allowed to ask a referee after a game or during the halftime interval (not on the field), in a polite and constructive way, to explain a law or foul, but not judgment calls made in the game.
 - a. Polite and friendly concern can be exchanged with the referee. If the polite tone of the conversation changes, the referee may abandon the exchange at any time.
 - b. Absolutely no sarcasm, harassment, or intimidation is allowed.

NOTE: It is recommended that coaches or other team members do not engage in any conversation with the referee(s) once the match has concluded.

Penalties (Coaches, Assistant Coaches & Bench Personnel)

In the opinion of the referee, depending on the severity of the offense, the referee may take any of the following actions:

- a. The referee may issue a verbal warning to the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel.
- b. The referee may caution (yellow card) the head coach of the offending party's team.
- c. The referee may send off (red card) the offending coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel. Once sent off, the individual will be required to leave the field immediately.

If the offender cannot be positively identified, then, in accordance with the Laws of the Game, the head coach will receive the Penalty.

The referee should abandon the game if the coach, assistant coach, or bench personnel do not leave the field or any immediate adjoining area after having been instructed to do so.

Additional penalties associated with the ejection of a coach, assistant coach or bench personnel may be assessed by the local club or league which sanctioned the match in accordance with their documented policy. These penalties may be no less stringent than sanctions as may be imposed by the MSYSA Adjudication Committee following their review, if conducted, of the incident.

Referees

Referees are expected to maintain a professional and respectful demeanor. Team officials are encouraged to report any disrespectful or unprofessional behavior to the applicable competition authorities. Competition authorities are to then share the report with the applicable referee assignor(s) and the MSYSA State Youth Referee Administrator. **Referee Abuse**

All cases of alleged abuse or assault of a referee shall be reported by the Referee to that game's respective Assignor within 48 hours of said behavior. The Assignor will manage and forward to SYRA, Club, and League/Event Organizer for review and disciplinary action in accordance with U.S. Soccer Policy 701. The MSYSA Adjudication Committee will handle any applicable appeals. Although MSYSA is continually bound by USSF Policy and its various revisions, definition of referee abuse and referee assault found in USSF Policy 531-9 as of the creation date of this Policy is offered by way of information as follows:

- a. Referee abuse is a verbal statement or physical act not resulting in bodily contact which implies or threatens physical harm to a referee or the referee's property or equipment.
- b. Abuse includes but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: using foul or abusive language toward a referee that implies or threatens physical harm; spewing any beverage on a referee's physical property; or spitting at (but not on) the referee.
- c. The minimum suspension is 3 games.

Referee Assault

- a. Referee Assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.
 - i. For purposes of this Policy, "intentional act" shall mean an act intended to bring about a result which will invade the interests of another in a way that is socially unacceptable. Unintended consequences of the act are irrelevant.
- b. Assault includes, but is not limited to the following acts committed upon a referee: hitting, kicking, punching, choking, spitting on, grabbing or bodily running into a referee; head butting; the act of kicking or throwing any object at a referee that could inflict injury; damaging the referee's uniform or personal property, i.e., car, equipment, etc.
- c. The minimum suspension is 6 months.