

Massachusetts Youth Soccer Coach's Code of Conduct

Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (Mass Youth Soccer) and its Member Organizations (our Town Programs, Clubs, and Leagues) are committed to promoting the highest levels of respect and consideration in the conduct of all participants (coaches, players, spectators, and referees) during matches at all levels. We want to ensure that matches are fair, positive, and enjoyable experiences for all of the children and adults involved. A soccer match should be friendly and unifying - a spirited social and athletic occasion for all.

To clarify expectations of conduct, we jointly expect all coaches to conform to this code of conduct at all times.

- Before, during, and after the match, you are at all times an example of dignity, patience, and positive spirit.
- Before a match, respectfully introduce yourself to the opposing coaches and to the referee/official(s).
- During the matches and practices, you are responsible for the sportsmanship of your players. If one of your players is disrespectful, irresponsible, or overly aggressive, take the player out of the match or practice until they calm down.
- At all times (matches and practices), you are also responsible for the conduct of the parents of your players and other spectators rooting for your team. It is your responsibility to explain to them acceptable player and parent/spectator behavior in a preseason meeting. Refer to our Parents/Guardians/Spectators and Players' Codes of Conduct.
 - Before the season, send out the Parents/Guardians/Spectators and Players Code of Conduct.
- At matches, encourage all parents/guardians/spectators from both teams to applaud and cheer for good plays by both teams. Discourage them from yelling at players and the referee/official - be as forceful and direct as necessary.
- During the match, do not address the referee/official at all. Do not question their calls.
- Acknowledge good sportsmanship when it's displayed as necessary.
- If you have a complaint, report your opinion to your League. Your observations will be taken seriously if they are presented objectively, factually, and formally.
- Demand a sports environment that is free from drugs, alcohol and tobacco and refrain from their use at all matches, exhibitions, practices, and events.
- Never coach a match or conduct a practice under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Never use profanity or make obscene gestures, or engage in any inappropriate behavior or conduct, at any time.
- After the match, thank the referee/official(s) and ask your players to do the same.

Coaches who don't follow the expectations described above will be disciplined or removed.

In closing, Mas Youth Soccer stresses two points: Officials (Referees, Assistant Referees, 4th Officials, and Linespeople) - especially young and inexperienced ones - are like your players and yourself, in that they need time to develop. You play an important role in helping them to

improve by letting them concentrate on the match. You can help by encouraging them to be their best and by accepting their inevitable and occasional mistakes. Your role as a coach is to concentrate on your players' enjoyment of the sport and their overall, long-term development, and to support the officials. Use self-regulation to monitor your behavior at all times! When you follow these expectations, the spirit of the sport of soccer will be alive and well in Massachusetts and will grow, along with the enjoyment of all.

Coach's Responsibilities

In addition to the Coach's Code of Conduct, the following Coach Responsibilities should be followed during every youth soccer related activity:

- Understand and accept that coaching is a position of trust.
- Be a positive role model for their players and maintain their personal integrity and dignity at all times.
- Create a player centered environment where players are free to make autonomous decisions.
- Remember that players are involved for fun and enjoyment and you should strive to create a positive soccer environment that reflects why they play.
- Understand that as a youth coach, the match is for the children, not the adults.
- Consistently have a positive attitude and praise players for their efforts and playing fair regardless of the outcome of the match.
- Never criticize or yell at any player on your team for making a mistake nor address an opposing player in a derogatory manner.
- De-escalate any physical or verbal abuse in youth sports.
- Understand that winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one.
- Place the well being and growth of every player above your personal desire to win.
- Understand that being a coach means being, first and foremost, a role model.
- Create a safe, fun and inclusive environment that provides opportunities for all of your players the capacity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem.
- Create co-constructed team and individual goals. Know and understand your soccer organizations playing time guidelines and give every player an opportunity to play as much as possible.
- Remind the players about the co-constructed goals and objectives for the team, as well as the rules of the match and the policies of your soccer organization, whenever requested or necessary, to the best of your ability.
- Inspect all equipment and fields on a regular basis to ensure the safety of players, paying special attention to the security of goal frames.