



Coaches' Code of Conduct

The Board of Directors of Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, Incorporated (Mass Youth Soccer) and Middlesex Youth Soccer League are concerned about the conduct of all coaches and referees during games at all levels, from recreational to premier to ODP.

We want to ensure that games are fair, positive and enjoyable experiences for all of the children and adults involved. A soccer game should be friendly and unifying - a spirited social and athletic occasion for players, coaches, referees and spectators.

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

- Before, during and after the game, be an example of dignity, patience and positive spirit.
- Before a game, introduce yourself to the opposing coach and to the referee.
- During the game, 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 game at least long enough for him/her to calm down.
- During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of the parents of your players. It is imperative to explain acceptable player and parent behavior in a preseason meeting.
- Encourage them to applaud and cheer for good plays by either team. Discourage them and you may need to be forceful and direct from yelling at players and the referee.
- During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of spectators rooting for your team.
- During the game, do not address the referee at all. If you have a small issue, discuss it with the referee calmly and patiently after the game.
- If you have a major complaint, or if you think the referee was unfair, biased, unfit or incompetent, report your opinion to your League. Your reactions will be taken seriously if they are presented objectively and formally.
- After the game, thank the referee and ask your players to do the same.

We stress two points:

1) Referees - especially young and inexperienced ones - are like your players and yourself, in that they need time to develop. You can play an important role in helping them to improve by letting them concentrate on the game. You can help by encouraging them, by accepting their inevitable, occasional mistakes and by offering constructive post-game comments. On the other hand, you could discourage and demoralize the referees by criticizing their decisions, by verbally abusing them and inciting - or even accepting - your own players' overly aggressive behavior.

2) Your example is powerful, for better or worse. If you insist on fair play, if you concentrate on your players' enjoyment of the game and their overall, long term development, and if you support the referee, your players and their parents will notice. If you encourage (or allow) your players to play outside the rules, if you're overly concerned about results, and if you criticize the referee harshly, your players and their parents will also notice.

Think about what you're doing during a game! Uphold the Spirit of the Game! If you follow the expectations described above, the spirit of the game will be alive and well in Massachusetts and will grow, along with the enjoyment of all.

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

Coach's Signature

Date

MYSL Coaches Code of Conduct and Rules 21, 22 & 23

21. Coach and Fan Conduct (Zero Tolerance Policy)

- a) It is the responsibility of ALL coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players and spectators (supporters) in all matches. Abusive and obscene language, violent play, violent conduct, fighting, harassment, intimidation and other behavior detrimental to the game will not be tolerated. A coach's responsibility for referee support and spectator control includes the times prior to, during and after the game at the field and surrounding areas. Failure to do so will undermine the referee's authority and has the potential of creating a hostile environment for players, the referee and all other participants and spectators.
- b) The MYSL Zero Tolerance Policy regarding Misconduct towards Referees requires that persons responsible for a team and spectators will not address the referee at all during the play of the game.
- i) Exceptions for persons responsible for a team (Coaches and Assistant Coaches)
During the game:
- Responding to a referee initiating communication
 - Making Substitutions
 - Pointing out emergencies or safety issues At half-time or at the end of the match:
 - A coach/manager can ask a referee to explain a rule(s) in a polite and constructive manner.
 - Polite and friendly feedback can be given to a referee.
 - Absolutely NO sarcasm, harassment, or intimidation.
- ii) Penalties for coaches:
Referees may use their best judgement on how to discipline a coach who is violating this policy in the course of a league match. This includes following the "Ask, Tell, Dismiss" protocol as defined in USSF policy, abiding with IFAB Law 5 of the Game, and issuing the appropriate cards (i.e. Yellow and/or Red). It is hoped that these actions will be documented and provided to the appropriate MYSL authorities.
- iii) Exceptions for Spectators: During the game:
- Responding to a referee initiating communication.
 - Pointing out emergencies or safety issues
- iv) Penalties for Spectators:
Referees may use their best judgement on how to discipline a spectator who is violating this policy in the course of a league match. This may include the following:
1st Infraction: Referee shall stop the game and ask the coach(es) to quiet the offending spectator.
2nd Infraction: A verbal warning. The referee shall stop the match and ask the coach(es) to warn the spectator that the next infraction will be an ejection or the referee will abandon the match.
3rd Infraction: The referee shall instruct the coach(es) to direct the spectator to leave the area. The referee shall abandon the match if the spectator does not comply.
- c) Coaches are highly encouraged to submit referee evaluations (good and bad) with-in 48 hours of the completion of the match – see MYSL rule 31.
- d) MYSL recommends that the referee deal with coach(es) and spectator(s) infractions in accordance with IFAB Law 5 of the Game.
- e) If the referee abandons the match, directs a person to leave the area, or issues a caution, the referee shall send a misconduct report for review – see MYSL Rule 29. MYSL asks

that the information provided by the referee in the misconduct report be sufficient and detailed to determine follow-up actions required by the MYSL Commissioners, Age Directors, and/or Sportsmanship Committee. A review of the reported incident may result in a penalty up to and including suspension, and/or forfeit of the match. Additionally, unsporting behavior from coaches, players, referees, or spectators towards others will also not be tolerated and shall be reported to the MYSL Commissioners, Age Directors, and/or Sportsmanship Committee for review. This review may result in a penalty up to and including suspension and/or forfeit of the match.

If it is found that multiple incidents involving coaches, spectators, players, teams from the same organization have violated this policy, additional penalties, including monetary fines, may be assessed toward the organization.

- f) Referee abuse and assault (USSF Policy 531-9—Misconduct Toward Game Officials)
 - i) Referee assault is defined by USSF as:
 - 1. Referee assault is an intentional act of physical violence at or upon a referee.
 - 2. 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.
 - 3. 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.
 - ii) Referee abuse is defined by USSF as:
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. 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 personal property; or spitting at (but not on) the referee.
 - iii) When any amateur or professional player, coach, manager, club official or game official assaults or abuses a referee, the original jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter shall vest immediately with Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association.
 - iv) When an allegation of assault is verified by Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, the person is automatically suspended until the hearing on the assault.

22. Ejections

- a) In the case of a player or coach ejection, the referee shall send the passcard (Spring Season only) to the respective Commissioner immediately following the game. At the same time, the referee shall also submit a USSF misconduct report to the Commissioner and other appropriate League Officials.
 - i) An ejection not covered by Rule 23 will carry an automatic one (1) game suspension, unless the Commissioner imposes additional suspensions.
 - ii) The suspension will start with the first game following the ejection.
 - iii) The Commissioner will hold the passcard and the player (or parent) shall make arrangements to pick-up his/her passcard.
- iv) If the Commissioner considers the offense to be of a more serious nature, he/she shall refer the matter to the Sportsmanship Committee who will hear the case of all parties concerned and decide upon appropriate action.

- b) Coaches or assistant coaches who are ejected from a game/dismissed from the match must leave the playing complex and may not in any way continue to coach. Failure to comply could result in permanent suspension from the MYSL.
- c) A coach, assistant coach or player who has been ejected or suspended may not return to any team in any capacity until such time as the suspension has been lifted. Failure to abide by this could result in permanent suspension from the MYSL.

23. Player/Coach Infractions

- a) Yellow Cards
 - i) In the case of a player, coach, or team official receiving a yellow card, the referee shall submit a misconduct report to the respective Commissioner and other appropriate League Officials immediately following the game.
 - ii) The accumulation of yellow cards by any player, coach, or team official in a specific season shall be subject to an additional suspension per the schedule below:

Total Yellow Cards	Additional Suspension
4	one (1) game
5	two (2) games
6	one (1) year from date of last infraction
- b) Red Cards
 - i) Any player receiving a red card will be immediately suspended for the remainder of that game and for one (1) additional game.
 - ii) Any coach or team official receiving a red card will be immediately suspended for two (2) games.
 - iii) Any coach or team official receiving a second suspension during the season will be suspended indefinitely. Said coach must appeal to the Commissioner and Sportsmanship Committee for reinstatement.
 - iv) The Commissioner and Sportsmanship Committee will suspend any player receiving a second red card during a season indefinitely pending a hearing.
- c) Fighting
 - i) In cases of fighting, a player shall be suspended for three (3) or more games and the coach may be suspended pending a review of the Commissioner and Sportsmanship Committee. A decision must be rendered prior to the next scheduled game.
 - ii) In the event of players leaving the bench area to enter the field to participate in a fight, the coach and assistant coach must appear before the Board of Directors for a hearing to determine whether or not the team should be suspended for the remainder of the season.
 - iii) If a player leaves the bench area to participate in a fight on the field and is ejected by the referee, he/she shall be suspended for three (3) or more games pending a review of the Commissioner and Sportsmanship Committee.
 - iv) If a coach leaves the bench area to take part in a fight, the Commissioner and the Sportsmanship Committee may suspend him/her indefinitely pending a hearing. A decision must be rendered prior to the next scheduled game.
- d) Referee Assault
 - i) Any player, coach or team official physically or verbally assaulting a referee will be suspended a minimum of one (1) year. If the incident is considered serious, the Commissioner and Sportsmanship Committee may impose an indefinite suspension.