

Code of Conduct for Coaches

The Board of Directors of Vermont Soccer Association and the leaders of the affiliated leagues are concerned about the conduct of all coaches and referees during games at all levels, from recreational to premier to ODP.

We want to insure 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, referees, other coaches, and other spectators.
- 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:

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 players' overly aggressive behavior.

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, or if you criticize the referee harshly, your players and their parents will 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 Vermont and will grow, along with the enjoyment of all.

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