

West Virginia Soccer Association 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, West Virginia Soccer Association and all member organizations will implement this Parents'/Guardian's/Spectator's Code of Conduct which is detailed below. The West Virginia Soccer Association 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

1. Do not force your child to participate in sports.
2. Applaud good plays; don't dwell on bad plays. Children play sports to have fun, make new friends, and learn new skills.
3. Children imitate their parents. If you are disruptive or act inappropriately, your child, and possibly others, will act in a similar fashion.
4. The sidelines are not a place to shout personal instructions. Encouraging 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!"
5. There is more to life than soccer. Encourage your child to participate in other activities.
6. Respect the coach's decision and abilities. Don't force your child to decide whether to listen to you or to the coach.
7. Stress fair and sensible play. Soccer is a contact sport, let the officials determine fair or foul play
8. Promote the long-term importance of practice over the short-term excitement of matches.
9. Promote the importance of teamwork.
10. Never lose sight of the fact that you are a role model.
11. The other team is the opponent, not the enemy. Treat all with respect.
12. Mistakes are a part of the learning process for everyone. Positive reinforcement goes a long way.
13. Take time to learn the rules of the match and the policies of the club and league.
14. Remember that coaches and administrators are usually volunteers. A "thank you" every once in a while is often a nice reward.

Parent's/Guardian's/Spectator's Zero Tolerance Physical Abuse Policy

All parents, guardians, and spectators of players are subject to the Zero Tolerance Physical Abuse Policy:

1. Any parent, guardian, or spectator that attempts to threaten or cause physical injury to any individual associated with WVSA or its member Organizations (Towns/Clubs/Leagues) shall be subject to, and their children shall be subject to immediate suspension from play and/or other league involvement, for up to one year at the sole discretion of the authority of the competition where the infraction occurred.
2. A second instance of an attempt to threaten or cause physical injury shall result in up to a minimum three year suspension for the player(s) and the parent/guardian from any involvement.

All individuals associated with WVSA are expected to uphold the values of honesty, good sportsmanship, and respect for the integrity of team participation and team play within WVSA and other related sports organizations.

All individuals associated with WVSA are expected to understand and comply with the WVSA 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 listed above shall include, but not be limited to:

- Use of obscene or vulgar language in a boisterous manner to anyone at any time.
- 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.
- 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.