



WYSA Recommendations and Guidelines for Sideline Behavior

In an effort to ensure a positive and healthy experience for soccer players, referees and all parents and spectators, the Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association offers these recommendations for constructive sideline behavior for parents and coaches. The WYSA encourages Clubs and Districts to post this information on its respective websites and utilize this as a tool in educating parents and coaches. A reminder that the WYSA has a Zero Tolerance Policy towards referee abuse.

POSITIVE Sideline Behavior by Parents & Spectators	Behavior by Parents & Spectators to AVOID
<p>Supporting & Motivating Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your biggest job is to cheer in a positive manner and applaud great plays and great efforts by ALL players and the team. MAKE IT FUN! Try to look for the little improvements in all the players. Being specific helps. "Great Cross, Jimmy" "Nice run, Emma" etc. Observe for quality vs results. Is your player and the team working hard and trying to play "the game". 	<p>Supporting & Motivating Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embarrassing your child in front of teammates for his play by trying to make him work harder or analyzing his play. This only frustrates the player. True, it may make your child work harder for a few minutes just to make you happy, but it won't keep a positive lasting impression. Avoid focusing on just your child, even if the "best" player. This is a team effort and one player cannot and should not do it all.
<p>Where to Sit or Stand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opposite the players' sideline. If you get anxious and pace up and down the sideline, it makes your player anxious too – consider bringing a chair and sitting in it. 	<p>Where to Sit or Stand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never behind the team or coach and never along the endline or behind the goal. Please, no smoking. Some athletes may have asthma.
<p>Instructions to Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be NO instructions from the parents. It may seem helpful, but it is not allowing them to make decisions and learn on their own. After the game, look for "parenting opportunities" to talk about any adversity or frustration – avoiding blaming others or making excuses. 	<p>Instructions to Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the game, parents should not offer any verbal direction. It may be different than what the coach or players have been working on and only causes confusion and frustration to the players. Avoid calling your child over at half time or giving direction. This is the time for the player to be with the coach.
<p>Strategy Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be NO instructions from the parents. 	<p>Strategy Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right or wrong, any parental advice different than what the coach or players have been working on causes confusion and frustration to the players.
<p>Helping the Referee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing needs to be said during the game to the referees. No matter what your feelings of the game, it would be a nice gesture to thank the referees for their work. Once the game is over...the game is over! Good sportsmanship is the best model for your child to follow. 	<p>Helping the Referee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not call fouls, offside, hand ball, or yell "What was that?", "What are you calling?", "You're so biased" etc. The referee is trying his/her best and is not biased against anybody. Body language, moaning, etc. – this too is counterproductive. During or after the game, refrain from making inquiries with the referees about decisions he or she made.
<p>Injuries and Physical Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They do happen – the players are competing hard and soccer is a contact sport. Recognize that good balance & agility help players avoid injury and deal with physical contact. 	<p>Injuries and Physical Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We should not assume that keeping soccer safe is entirely up to the referee. They call fouls or violations after they happen, not before. If your player exhibits any sign of a head injury, insist that they are removed from the match immediately and then consult with a doctor.
<p>The Other Teams' Spectators & Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They have their half to cheer from, your team has your side. Consider giving praise for a great play or hard work by the opposing team. <u>Be your own best example for sportsmanship and sideline behavior.</u> 	<p>The Other Teams' Spectators & Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is best to not engage the other team's spectators or players in any way unless it is positive before, during or after the game – it never works out the way you hope it will. Understand that not all players and spectators will speak English. Do not view parents of the other team as "the opposition".



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POSITIVE Sideline Behavior by Coaches	Sideline Behavior by Coaches to AVOID
Generally observe all of the above for Parental Sideline Behavior	
<p>Coach’s Role with Respect to Parents & Spectators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the season, remind them of positive behavior. • Gentle reminders throughout the season and praise when they set a great example. • YOU, THE COACH, are responsible for parents and spectators. • Have your up-to-date State Issued Coach Pass with you. • Referee feedback may only be supplied via a Club Official in writing, to the Competition Administrator. 	
<p>Injuries and Physical Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait to be waived on to the field by the referee if a player is injured. • Have a basic medical kit available. • Be sure players and parents understand that the sport of soccer is a contact sport and injuries can happen. Have emergency contact and medical info available. • As a simple gauge for head injuries or possible concussion, ask your player to recite the months of the year backwards. Difficulty with this may be sign of a head injury. • If your player exhibits any sign of a head injury, remove them from play immediately and do not resume until they have seen a doctor. 	
<p>Where to Sit or Stand when Coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bench or within the technical area. • Sitting down generally conveys to your players that you are calm & composed – so they are more likely to be calm & composed on the field. <p><i>Note: It's not typical for youth soccer fields to have a marked technical area but coaches are encouraged to remain within an area that extends 1 yd on either side of the designated seated area and extends forward up to 1 yd from the sideline.</i></p>	<p>Where to Sit or Stand when Coaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacing up and down the sidelines makes the players anxious. • Up against the sideline interferes with the movement and sightlines of the Assistant Referee.
<p>Communicating Instructions to Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to let players make their own decisions – they learn best by doing and trial and error. • During the game, players not on the field should wear differently-colored tops and warm-up away from the field of play. 	<p>Communicating Instructions to Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid coaching “every roll of the ball”. • Try not to dictate every decision to play the players and team. • No cursing. Ever.
<p>Substitution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruct player(s) to go to the half line, know the player(s) and wait until the referee waives them into the game. • Be familiar with Law 3 governing substitution procedures and any adaptations for a specific league or event. 	<p>Substitution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not “run up” the player to the half line and into the game or run in directly from the bench. • Do not confuse substitution procedures in other sports for that of soccer.
<p>The Referee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shake their hand and introduce yourself before the match. • Require that your entire team shake the referees hand after the match and thank them for their work. • Be prepared to provide a proper-size ball and other equipment (e.g., nets or corner flags). 	<p>The Referee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling fouls for the referee is never helpful. • Dissenting/negative body language – it also sets a bad example for your players. • During and after the game, persisting with inquiries about calls or decisions will only make the situation more frustrating for everyone and distracts the referee from the task at hand.
<p>The Other Teams’ Coaches and Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shake their hand before and after the game. • Be your own best example for sportsmanship and sideline behavior! If the other team’s spectators are not exemplary, in your view, let it go. 	<p>The Other Teams’ Coaches and Players</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking to or about the opponents in any way other than positive is not setting a good example.

These guidelines and recommendations are adapted, in part, from the United States Soccer Federation’s “Best Practices for Coaching Soccer in the United States” and with assistance from WYSA Directors of Coaching and the Wisconsin Program for Referee Development.