Coaches Code of Conduct

The Board of Directors of Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, Incorporated (Mass Youth

Soccer) 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 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 the referee is willing and able. Harassing,

taunting or abuse towards referees will not be tolerated.

• 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 post­game

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. 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.