

MUSC Recreation League **Sportsmanship Policies and Guidelines**



The purpose of the Recreation Program of the Montclair United Soccer Club (MUSC) is to develop soccer skills and team concepts in as many youth players as our resources will allow. Our purpose is not the promotion of certain individual players. While competitive play is part of the learning process, the winning of games is really only just the focus of play. It should not be allowed to become the measure of success.

It is the job of the volunteer coaching staff to work with MUSC to make this objective come true.

Enforcement of Guidelines:

1. Compliance with this objective and the guidance set forth below will be significant criteria in judging the suitability of a coach.
2. The Club will not permit any person who fails to accept this guidance to hold a position with the Club.

MUSC requires coaches to accept responsibility for the development of all the players selected for a team, not just those who may show a greater amount of soccer skills or athleticism at a particular time. Guided by this basic principle, MUSC adds the following specific guidance:

General Club Rules:

1. Parents must remain on the opposite side of the field. No adult other than a recognized coach, with a Kid-safe form on file, should be on the sideline with the players. No adults should be behind the goals.
2. All coaches must coach from their side of the midfield line. Do not cross over onto the other team's half and never coach from behind goals.
3. Make sure all players get equal playing time. Every child should play at least one-half of the game.
4. Coaches should rotate the starting lineup so that all players have an opportunity to start; no player is to be identified as a substitute.
5. Do not allow lopsided scores. Make your best effort not to let your team run up the score. If your team is 4 goals ahead of the other team, you need to make the following efforts to even up the game:
 - a. must rotate skilled offensive players to defensive positions
 - b. keep your defensive players back (not by midfield)
 - c. have your players make a pre-set number of passes before shoot at goalTeams who consistently show that they are running up scores will face disciplinary action from MUSC.

Coach-Player Interaction:

1. The MUSC coach's job is to teach soccer skills, team play and sportsmanship to the children on their team. Winning is good but not the primary mission. Coaches should strive to make practices and games fun for all players. Rotate your players through all positions, particularly in the younger divisions.
2. Use positive words with all players, avoid negative comments and open criticism.
3. Don't over direct the action on the field. Most kids cannot decipher the yelling and in most instances, they're onto the next play by the time you're done with your comment. This is particularly true of the younger divisions. Soccer is a fluid game -let them play and enjoy it.
4. Be aware of age appropriate skill level and do not expect too much.
5. Do not address or refer to players on the other team other than to acknowledge good play.
6. Require your players to be respectful of their opponents, their own teammates and the referees. Be mindful of any trash talking during the game or during the post-game handshake and stop it immediately if you observe this behavior.

Coach-Referee Interaction:

1. Treat the Referees with respect at all times.
2. Introduce yourself to the Referees at the beginning of the game and shake their hands at the end of the game.
3. Remember that although the Referees are licensed and trained, they will make mistakes - they are human. Also note that these Referees are often Middle or High School age. They are also young, often very young in the younger divisions, and you should always be mindful of this when dealing with them.
4. Do not question a Referee's ruling by shouting out at them on the field. If you have an issue with a call or their performance, talk to them discretely at half time or at the end of the game. If you have a serious issue, contact Paul Burr, the MUSC referee coordinator, after the game.

Coach-Coach Interaction:

1. Introduce yourself to the other coaches before the beginning of the game if you do not already know them. If you already know them, it is good to shake hands and acknowledge them.
2. Work together to be sure the game runs smoothly.(e.g. by agreeing to modify the number of players on the field if the situation warrants it.)
3. Deal calmly and directly with other coaches on anything occurring on the field (e.g. trash talking, overly physical play) that may concern you.
4. Use your *Commissioner* if issues arise during a game that you feels weren't resolved properly at the field. Do not try to resolve an issue in the parking lot after the game.
5. They can help solve problems in a discrete, non-confrontational way.
6. DO NOT issue post game broadcast e-mails about issues that arise during a game under any circumstances.

7. **Summary:** You and the other coaches are co-directors of the game. You have a responsibility not only to direct your own teams but to work together to ensure that the game is a positive experience for all the children present, that includes children who may be spectators, players and referees. Treat them as you would your own children, with kindness. Treat your fellow coaches with respect. Remember, you are the adult face of Montclair United Soccer Club during your games and practices. Thanks for your efforts this season.

Coaches must exhibit behavior that sets a good example for parents and players:

1. MUSC coaches must exhibit sportsmanlike conduct both on and off the field.
2. Regardless of the outcome of a game, coaches should recognize the efforts of players.
3. MUSC may consider disciplinary action against any coach who fails to set a good example.
4. At the beginning of the fall season every travel team family will receive a copy of this *Guidance to Coaches*. If anyone needs to report a problem, contact the through email (address via the MUSC website) or regular mail.
5. All reported violations will be reviewed. The burden of proof will be on the coach to show he/she has followed this Guidance. (*MUSC strongly encourages each coach to track the playing time and positions played by each child.*)
6. Coaches who do not follow these guidelines may be removed at the discretion of the Board of MUSC

All parent coaches and managers are volunteers and the club appreciates all of your efforts. It should be noted that just as the teams are officially disbanded at the end of each spring season, all volunteer positions are also re-evaluated each year. As such, please no one should assume that the position of coach or manager is automatically renewed. Many factors, including parent feedback, the opportunity for someone else to be involved, the benefit of a professional coach to the team, as well as others, will be considered in naming a team's coaches and/or assistants. The MUSC Committee will do its best to keep volunteers informed of any issues and concerns brought to its attention or of any planned changes.

Sincerely,

Gregg Bangs and Mitch Heisler
President, MUSC

I have read the Coaching Guidelines and agree to abide by them:

Division: _____

Coach: _____

Assist Coaches: _____
