



Sportsmanship and Zero Tolerance

10.02 – Updated April 4, 2016

This policy has been written by Methacton United Soccer Club to help maintain a healthy balance between fair play and safety. This policy is a club goal to establish a better relationship between coaches, players, parents and officials. It is the intent of Methacton United Soccer Club to help players, coaches, parents, and fans to be made aware of the true meaning of SPORTSMANSHIP.

SPORTSMANSHIP is defined as the practice of participating in sports with a conduct and attitude that is considered befitting of that participant, especially fair play and courtesy. It encompasses both ethical behavior and acts of integrity.

ETHICS is defined as the principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a group. It is a system of principals governing behavior.

INTEGRITY is defined as a firm adherence to a code of values that incorporate principles of honesty.

Fundamentals of Sportsmanship

1. Gain an understanding and appreciation for the rules of the game. Know the rules. If you do not know the rules, refrain from expressing opinions on coaches or officials. The SPIRIT of good sportsmanship depends on conformance to a rule's intent as well as the letter of the law.
2. Exercise representative behavior at all times. Your behavior influences others whether you are aware of it or not.
3. Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team. Applause for an opponent's good performance displays generosity and courtesy that should be regularly practiced. This reflects a true awareness of the game by recognizing and acknowledging quality.
4. Exhibit respect for the official(s) Officials are impartial arbitrators. They have been trained in the laws of the game and are performing to the best of their ability. Mistakes by all participants are part of the game. The rule of GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP is to accept and abide by the officials' decisions.
5. Openly display respect for opponent at all times. Opponents should be treated cordially and be accorded tolerance. Treat them as you want to be treated. Be a positive Representative for your club and team at all times.
6. Display pride in your actions at all times Never allow your ego to interfere with good judgment and your responsibility as a club and team representative.

Sportsmanship Code Guidelines and Behavior Expectations

Coaches

- Place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- Respect the integrity and personality of the individual athlete, remembering the large range of emotions and physical development for the same age group.
- Exemplify the highest moral character, behavior and leadership. Adhere to strong ethical and integrity standards.
- Learn the rules of the game and teach them in letter and spirit.
- Set a good example for players and spectators. Refrain from:
 - Arguments in front of your team and parents
 - Gestures indicating an official or opposing coach does not know what they are doing or talking about
 - Throwing objects in disgust
- Shake hands with opposing coaches **and officials** before and after each match.
- Respect the integrity of the official. By giving respect, you get respect.
- Do not use profanity or other objectionable language.
- Be responsible for your players **and parents** on the sideline.
- **Make sportsmanship your first priority.**

Players

- Learn the rules of the game.
- **Treat teammates, coaches, referees, and others with RESPECT.**
- Come prepared physically and mentally to training sessions and matches.
- Wish opponents good luck before the game and congratulate them in a courteous manner following victory or defeat.
- Respect the judgment of the official(s), treating them with respect even if you disagree with their judgment will only make a positive impression of you and your team.
- Play for the fun of it.
- Control your temper, not only against the opposing team and officials, but with yourself and your teammates.
- Do not use foul or inappropriate language at any time.
- Shake hands with the other team and the official after the game.

Parents and Spectators

- Always encourage your child to play by the rules.
- Applaud good plays by **either** team.
 - Speak about the opposing players in the same manner you would want their parents speaking about your child.
- Watch and enjoy the GAME! Let the players play, the coach's coach and the officials officiate.
- Thank your coaches – win or lose!
 - Remember ALL of our coaches are volunteers who are sacrificing their own time to coach your child.
- Never ridicule or shout at your child or others for making a mistake or losing the game.
- Refrain from questioning the official's judgment or honesty. Recognize they are symbols of fair play integrity and sportsmanship
- Use no foul or inappropriate language



- Abuse of volunteers whether verbal, in writing or in email will not be tolerated.
- DO NOT COACH YOUR CHILD! – encourage them!
 - Don't try to “orchestrate” your child’s entire playing time on the field with instructions. Your comments may contradict what their coaches have told them to do. Remember that you’re not the coach. Words of encouragement should be the only things you’re saying

Zero Tolerance for Dissent and Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Methacton United Soccer Club, by this document, will be enforcing a “Zero Tolerance Policy”. The following is intended to outline the penalties for failing to comply with the premise of this policy.

Any player, coach, parent, spectator, or referee violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Executive Council of Methacton United Soccer Club. Disciplinary action may include:

- Probation
- Suspension
- Permanent expulsion of an individual, team or club from the program.

“**Dissent**” includes, but is not limited to:

- Questioning an official’s call
- Voicing displeasure with a call in a manner that can be heard by the official(s), players, and fans

“**Sportsmanship**” includes:

- Any and all actions, behavior and language deemed to be appropriate by and in accordance with the Rules of Fair Play and the Spirit of the Game

The coach of each team is responsible for his players’ and parents’ and/or fans’ behavior on his/her respective sideline. If a coach witnesses unacceptable behavior from a parent, the Coach has a responsibility to report it to the Executive Council of Methacton United Soccer Club.

- Any card given to a parent/fan will also be directed at the head coach.
- If a red card is issued to a parent or fan, then the coach and the offending person will be required to leave the field. If the team does not have an approved assistant coach on the sideline, then the game will be called.
- A red card does not have to be issued for Methacton United Soccer Club to enact penalties against coaches, players, or parents/fans.

Incident Review Process

It will be the responsibility of the Executive Council, based on the facts presented, to determine whether to allow the offending party to continue to coach, play, or attend that team’s future games. The Executive Council will:

- Review all incidents of dissent or unsportsmanlike conduct by a parent or a coach
- At its sole option, determine if a review is required of all incidents of dissent or unsportsmanlike conduct by a player
- Determine a penalty

If an appeal is requested, the Executive Council will hold a meeting at a neutral location. There will be a MANDATORY attendance requirement by the coach, player, and/or parent. Failure to attend this meeting will result in automatic suspension from attendance at any Club functions.



Decisions of Methacton United Soccer Club are final and no protests will be entertained. **If a coach or parent refuses to comply with the penalty, the player will serve the penalty and may suffer expulsion from the club.**

The Penalties for Dissent or Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Any incident reported will result in a fact finding meeting in which a penalty will be determined. Additionally, if a referee assigns a card the minimum penalties are as follows:

1st Yellow Card	
• Coach	WARNING and penalties as per league rules
• Player	Penalties as per league rules
• Parent or Fan	1 GAME SUSPENSION
2nd Yellow Card	
• Coach	1 GAME SUSPENSION and penalties as per league rules
• Player	Penalties as per league rules
• Parent or Fan	SEASON SUSPENSION and reimbursement of league fines
Red Card*	
• Coach	1 GAME SUSPENSION and penalties as per league rules
• Player	Penalties as per league rules
• Parent or Fan	SEASON SUSPENSION and reimbursement of league fines

* If a referee or other game/tournament official ejects or otherwise dismisses a coach, parent, or fan from the site of a game, penalties will be enacted as if a RED CARD were issued.

Due to the nature of SEASON SUSPENSIONS, unserved portions of season suspensions will be carried over to the following season in which that player participates.

Unacceptable Behaviors

- Verbal or physical abuse of an opponent, coach, official, player or spectator.
- Fighting or violence of any kind
- Taunting and trash talking
- “IN YOUR FACE” celebrations
- Use of profanity or other disrespectful language
- Questioning, disagreeing or harassing officials
- Throwing objects onto the playing field
- Boing an official’s decision
- Refusing to shake hands or give recognition for good performances
- Blaming loss of game on officials, coaches or participants
- Abuse of volunteers whether verbal, in writing or in email.



Acceptable (Expected) Behaviors

- Congratulating teammates and opponents for effort and excellent performances
- Shaking hands before and after the game
- Thanking officials for their effort and work
- Thanking coaches for their time and help
- Treat competition as a “GAME” instead of a “WAR”
- Applaud at end of game for performances of all participants
- Show concern for an injured player, regardless of team
- Helping a teammate or opponent who has fallen or been injured

Version History

Date	Summary of Changes
April 4, 2016	Transfer of policy to formal numbering. Amended language to equate any parent ejection to a red card. Minor edits for grammar and typographical errors.

