



SIDELINE BEHAVIOR PARENTS AND GUESTS

Evanston Soccer Association would like parents and guests to enjoy the game and cheer for our players. However, the following are best practices on how to support our players' development and represent our club:

***Our mission:** Foster the love of soccer and encourage personal growth from the life lessons learned through training and competition.*

- Stay positive with your player, his/ her team, and those present (including opponents and officials)
- Trust our professional coaching staff's advice and feedback. Know that development is a process.
- Seek understanding (after emotions have cooled; 24-hour rule)
- No coaching on the parents'/ guests' sideline
- Parents should not instruct their son or daughter about what to do/ how to perform
- No negative comments to our players, the opposing players, referees, or parents
- Do not address referees or question calls

Remember, giving instructions at games does not allow players to make decisions on their own. It is important that during the players' learning process for the coach to guide them to new decisions on the field as they grow within the game, and for each player to make decisions in cooperation with their teammates under the consideration of the coach's comments. This offers players plenty to contemplate. We ask parents to resist the temptation to coach from the sidelines. Please respect and allow the professional coaching staff to conduct their work without additional interference.

Below is a reminder of "WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO." Please keep these values in mind, like our coaches do, when making decisions, especially when reacting to an event at a game or training.

RESPECT4OTHERS

Respect for our coaches, referees, teammates, and competitors is the foundation of our club's values.

This value is instilled on many levels, going beyond the pitch and into the community.

TEAMWORK4SUCCESS

Teamwork is the collective spirit, driving force, and lasting bond that unites our players and fuels their success, on and off the pitch.

FUN4ALL

Playing soccer is fun. Our goal is to cultivate the joy that comes from learning and participating in healthy competition.

PASSION4PERSEVERANCE

Our players are continually challenged to overcome obstacles big and small.

Their determination to succeed builds a passion to persevere in both soccer and life.



SUGGESTED SIDELINE BEHAVIOR PARENTS AND GUESTS

DO's

Behaviors Suggested Sideline

SUPPORTING AND MOTIVATING PLAYERS

- **SUPPORTING ROLE:** The parents' and guests' biggest role is to support the players. If they choose to cheer, then they should be positive by applauding efforts of all players. Please support the club to make a positive and fun environment for all. *Ultimately though, the sound a youth soccer games should be kids playing.*
- **FOCUS ON OUR GAINS:** Look for the incremental improvements in our players. Be happy for the players' gains! Errors are part of the process.
- **KEEP PRESPECTIVE:** Please know that youth soccer games will NOT look like professional soccer games. These players are learning step-by-step and the development of their ability, positioning, and decisions is a **process** that takes time. Support each step in the process.
- **QUALITY OVER RESULTS:** Observe for quality vs. results. Is your player and the team working hard and trying to play the game in the "right" ways? There are many ways to win, but there are better ways to make meaningful gains in your player's development.

DON'Ts

Behaviors to Avoid

SUPPORTING AND MOTIVATING PLAYERS

- **YOUR AFFECT:** Embarrassing your child in front of teammates for his/her play by analyzing his/ her play only frustrates the player. It will not make a positive, lasting impression, or instill a habit that they own.
- **IT'S A TEAM SPORT:** Do not correct other players on the team, but do not only concentrate on your own player when offering applause. Soccer is a team effort.
- **IF YOU'RE NOT SURE:** Do not comment on plays or speculate why something took place to others if you are not sure. You can ask questions about the game to the coaching staff instead.



COMMENTING ON PLAY AT GAMES

- **ENCOURAGE/ APPLAUD ONLY:** Do not give instruction from the sidelines - even if you coached before, played in college, or were a professional player. Please allow the club's professional coaching staff and the players to do their work uninterrupted. It may seem helpful, but it is not allowing them to make decisions and learn through play.
- **MORE THAN A GAME:** After the game, look for "parenting opportunities" to talk about any adversity or frustration – *avoiding blaming others or making excuses*. Too much discussion on what should have been done may create anxiety. The player may then feel that they must meet your demands and expectations rather than follow the instruction of the coach or team.

STRATEGY CHANGES

- Coach may change the tactics for a variety of reasons (competitive adjustment or an adjustment to fit the players available). Players must adapt and be able to play with different tactics.

THE REFEREE

- **IT'S THEIR CALL:** Do not comment during the game to the referees. Many rules are subjective and at their discretion.
- **GRATITUDE:** No matter what your feelings of the game, it is a nice gesture to thank the referees for their work.
- **KEEP PERSPECTIVE:** Once the game is over, it is over. Good sportsmanship is the best model for your child to follow. Adversity is an opportunity to teach.

COMMENTING ON PLAY AT GAMES

- **NO INSTRUCTIONS:** During the game, parents should not offer any verbal direction. It may be different than what the coach or players have been working on causing confusion and frustration for the players.
- **HALF-TIME:** Avoid chatting with your child at half-time or giving directions as they walk-off the field. This is the time for the player reflect on the half and re-visit instructions with the coach and team.
- **CAR RIDE HOME:** The car ride home is your time as a parent. However, if you are interested in re-enforcing coaching points, please speak with the coach. It is not productive to criticize the coach, teammates, club, or others from the club when in the car. This is defeating for the player and team. All questions or concern should be addressed with the club first.

STRATEGY CHANGES

- Advice on strategy different than what the coach or players have been working on causes confusion and frustration to the players.
- Do not instruct the players. This can cause confusion to players and team's tactics.

THE REFEREE

- **IT'S THEIR CALL:** Do not call fouls, offside, hand ball, or yell "What was that?", "What are you calling?", "You're so biased" etc.
- **INTEGRITY:** The referee is trying his/her best and is not intentionally biased. Many rules are subjective and at their discretion.
- **ROLE MODELING:** We do not value or encourage negative body language and complaining.
- **COMMENTING:** During or after the game, please refrain from making inquiries with the referees about decisions he or she made.



INJURIES AND PHYSICAL PLAY

- Injuries and physical play do happen – the players are competing, and soccer is a contact sport.
- Please recognize that agility, balance, and coordination help players avoid injury and deal with physical contact.
- If your player exhibits any sign of a head injury, insist, if they have not been already, that they are immediately removed from the match and then consult with a doctor. All our coaches are educated on concussion awareness and will comply with removing players due to head injuries.

THE OTHER TEAM'S SPECTATORS & PLAYERS

- Please watch the game from a single half of the field along the sideline. This allows each team's families their own space.
- Consider giving praise for a great play or hard work by the opposing team. Be your own best example for sportsmanship and sideline behavior.

INJURIES AND PHYSICAL PLAY

- While referee behavior does impact matches, 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 is injured, please wait for the coach to call you over before coming to the players' sideline.

THE OTHER TEAM'S SPECTATORS & PLAYERS

- Do not negatively engage with the other team's spectators or players in any way (before, during or after the game). There are not positive outcomes from these confrontations.



PARENT PLEDGE

I PLEDGE TO RESPECT THE DECISIONS OF COACHES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CLUB AT ALL TIMES.

I realize they have a difficult job and act in the best interests of the individual players, the teams, and the Club. I acknowledge that all team placement and formation decisions are the exclusive province of the Director of Coaching. I accept that my child may occasionally be asked to play on other teams, for the good of the club as well as my child. No matter how I feel about a decision made by a coach, player, or representative of the Club, under no circumstances will I in any way mistreat or confront a coach, player, or representative of the Club in a verbally or physically inappropriate matter, either in person or by phone or correspondence. If a conflict arises, I will wait at least 24 hours before contacting the coach or Club representative, and I promise to be civil at all times.

I PLEDGE TO HONOR THE GAME.

I understand the importance of setting a good example for my child. No matter what others may do, I will show respect for everyone involved in the game, including officials, opposing fans, coaches, and players. I understand that officials make mistakes. If an official makes a call with which I disagree, I will remain silent. I pledge to refrain from making negative comments about my child's coach or the officials in my child's presence, since this can negatively influence his/her motivation and overall experience.

I PLEDGE TO USE POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT TO MOTIVATE MY CHILD.

I understand that a tiny fraction of youth sports participants receive college scholarships and that the top three reasons kids play sports are to have fun, make new friends, and learn new skills. I understand that the game is for the players, and I will keep sports in the proper perspective. I recognize the true measure is not how my child compares to others but how he/she compares to his/her best self.

I PLEDGE TO GET MY CHILD TO PRACTICES AND GAMES ON TIME.

I understand that not doing so can be disruptive, and may put him/her at risk by not providing adequate time for warm up. I will be on time to pick up my child from games and practices, to show respect for the coach, and to keep my child safe. I also pledge to have my child attend all practices and games, except when it cannot be avoided.

TEAM EVANSTON VIEWS ANY VIOLATION OF THE PARENT PLEDGE AS A SERIOUS MATTER.

I acknowledge that, by signing this Pledge, violations of its provisions can be subject to sanctions by Evanston Soccer Association, to be determined in the sole discretion of the Board. Such sanctions can include, among others, banishment from the sidelines of games and, in extreme circumstances, ejection of the family from the Club.

I WILL HONOR THE PARENT PLEDGE IN MY WORDS AND ACTIONS.