

## **THJSL Coach Conduct Expectation and Guidelines**

### **Approved September 5, 2023**

Our young referees are the future of the game, and we need to nurture them and not turn them away from officiating. We need to make sure that the referees feel welcome and want to come back next year to officiate.

It is critical that everyone involved in youth sports be treated with respect and dignity by all participants. This is especially true for youth referees who, at a young age, have been given the challenging role of managing soccer games where emotions can often run high and adult behavior by both coaches and parents can be difficult.

Coaches and referees are allies in making the participation in playing soccer a positive and rewarding experience for everyone and especially our players. To this end, positive and cooperative interactions between coaches and referees are required. Appropriate communications between them will help create a positive environment that ensures success for everyone.

Encouraged communications should include:

Pre-game introductions and clarifications on rules (like the build-out line) and any requests for the referee to cover when they talk to the players

During the game, dissent (see below) of any kind is **not allowed** by coaches, parents, or players. Referee calls may not be questioned although clarifications requested in a polite way (note that the game does not stop). Coaches and referees are encouraged to use game situations to educate the players whenever possible. This could include explaining why a call was made and the correct way of completing an action (like a throw-in).

After the game, coaches should thank the referee and can also use this time to politely and respectfully request more information on rules they may be confused about. Referees, having more training than most coaches on the rules, are in a unique position to help educate our coaches.

Note that unless there are egregious safety concerns, coaches and parents need to understand that physical contact in soccer is normal and expected and does not, in itself, constitute a foul. Coaches and parents are not allowed to yell at or badger the referee in any way if they disagree with calls being made (or not made.)

Coaches are ultimately responsible for the behavior of themselves, their players, and their parents. They need to fully understand and communicate the requirement that everyone, and especially that the referees, are to be treated with respect at all times and not subject to negative comments, yelling, threats, or degrading remarks.

**Dissent is NOT ALLOWED** by coaches, parents, or players. Dissent is classified based on the “3Ps” – Personal, Public, and Provocative.

- **Personal:** If what is said (verbally or otherwise) is directed at an official, it’s personal (the difference between “you are wrong” where the “you” is an official versus “I don’t agree with that call”).
- **Public:** If what is said (verbally or otherwise) is said loudly enough that it can be heard/seen by a large number of persons on or off the field, it is public (for example, shouting at the top of your lungs for the entire field to hear “I don’t agree with that call”)
- **Provocative:** If what is said (verbally or otherwise) includes generally recognizable unacceptable language, it is provocative (saying “I f...ing don’t agree with that f...ing call” or giving a one finger salute).

Tualatin Hills Junior Soccer League (THJSL) has adopted the following expectations for our coaches, referees, and clubs to ensure that all participants, and especially our referees, are treated at all times with respect and dignity. If this does not occur, the following delineates actions that can be taken to address inappropriate behavior by coaches and parents.

### **Coach Expectations, Responsibility, and Accountability:**

- Coaches are responsible for knowing the IFAB Laws of the Game (LoTG) and the THJSL Rules of Play (RoP).
- Coaches must accept that referees, by lieu of their training and certification as well as their position on the field, are the best qualified to manage games and should defer to this expertise.
- Coaches are responsible for the behavior of ALL Personnel (coaches and players) in the technical area (bench / sideline) and behavior of their spectators.
  - The referee may require the coach to take action to control the behavior of or remove spectators whose words or actions are offensive, insulting, abusive, profane, disruptive or interfere with a referee or the orderly conduct of the match.
  - Coaches may be warned, cautioned, or sent off for failing to control the conduct of the team’s spectators, assistant coaches, or players.
- All interactions between the coach and referee must be done in a respectful manner. At no time during the game should coaches question the calls of the referees. If they do so, disciplinary actions in the form of warnings or cards may be imposed.
- During the pre-game introductions, coaches are encouraged to introduce themselves and ask for any clarifications on rules that might confusing (ex., offsides, build out line, physical play, slide tackling, etc.)
- Coaches should not approach the referee at half-time unless it is in a polite and respectful manner, and pertinent to playing the second half. (“I have a question about how to coach my team about the buildout line” vs “You’re screwing up calls on the buildout line!”)
- At the end of the game, Coaches should thank the referee and at that time can also respectfully ask for help to understand rules. This **does not** include complaining about any calls that were made during the game.
- Coaches are required to inform the referee after the game of any injuries suffered by their players requiring medical attention. Referees will include this in their referee report.

## **Coach Expectations, Responsibility, and Accountability (continued):**

- Coaches may complete and submit a post-game referee evaluation form ([here](#)). This evaluation will be most useful if it presents information in a constructive manner.
- If at any time before, during, or after the game, the coach or any of their parents, engages in any of the activities defined as “dissent” above, disciplinary action can be imposed by the referee.
- Coaches are responsible for ensuring that their parents and players understand their responsibilities to treat everyone and especially the referee with respect and also the consequences to the player, coach, and parent, if they do not.

## **Referee Expectations:**

Referees are in charge of managing each game. In this capacity, by virtue of their more extensive training on the Laws and Rules of the Game and the referee certification requirements, they are considered the experts in these areas and more knowledgeable than the coaches, parents and players.

In addition, they observe the game from a different angle and closer proximity than anyone else on the pitch.

It is a requirement that everyone respect their expertise and support them throughout the game. This is especially true for younger referees who are not as experienced and, like everyone, may make mistakes. This does not give anyone on the field the right to yell, berate, or question them.

Referees and coaches are allies during the game and respectful and positive communication throughout the game by both referees and coaches is necessary. Education of the players and coaches by the referee is encouraged. Referees are encouraged to take the extra moments to explain calls to players and potentially instruct them on correct procedures (like for a throw-in or free-kicks). If coaches request clarification on rules respectfully, they can also provide these. Note that play should not stop for any requests like this and they can be discussed after the game.

Referees are responsible for ensuring the safety of the players. They should clearly communicate to the players before the game what is/is not allowed in terms of physical play. They should also reiterate that verbal abuse by players is not allowed and will result in disciplinary action.

Referees shall complete and file a post-game report within 24 hours of the game.

Referees are responsible for refereeing a game in a professional manner. This includes being properly outfitted for the game and giving their full attention to the game.

## **Club Responsibilities**

THJSL clubs have the responsibility of ensuring that their coaches and parents are educated as to the required behavior at games relative to the referees, coaches and opponents (i.e., the other team is not your enemy). It is critical that they understand the importance of treating everyone, and especially youth referees, with respect and dignity. It is also important that they understand the results of their actions if they do not follow these guidelines.

Each club shall adopt a Code of Conduct for coaches, players, and parents that clearly outlines these expectations. This Code of Conduct shall be accessible on each club's website and parents and coaches required to review and agree to them before the start of each season.

In their required coach meeting before each season, the Club will ensure that coaches are trained in the guidelines for referee/game conduct and understand the result if either they or their parents not following them and engaging in any of the forms of dissent against the referees.

Coaches will be asked to review these guidelines with their parents both before the start and throughout the season. This includes educating the parents on the results of bad behavior on their part: card/suspension for the coach and possible barring of the parents from subsequent game(s).

If a coach or parent has been reported for dissent, the Club will support the league in actions taken to discipline the coach, parent, or player. It is recommended that a board member also attend the next game for that coach or parent to observe and reinforce correct behavior.

## **Conclusion:**

If everyone works together in a positive and constructive manner, the recreational soccer experience will be greatly enhanced for everyone and our referees, especially our young ones, will have a rewarding experience and return the next year. All participants have a unique role to play and ensuring that each does so in a respectful and collaborative manner will result in a positive soccer experience for all.



# SIDELINE POLICY



**CHEER ..... Without Instructing**  
**PRAISE ..... All players for Effort**  
**RESPECT ... All Players, Coaches  
& Referees**

*These are kids This is a game  
The referees are human*

THIS IS NOT THE WORLD CUP!

