



# Mad River Youth Soccer League

## Laws of the Game

Last updated Monday, June 25, 2018

### Quick Glance Summary

	U5 & U6	U7* (only if pure U7*)	U8 (mixed U7 & U8)	U9 & U10	U11 & U12	U13 & U14	U15 & older
Field Size Ranges (yds)	15 x 20	25-35 x 15-25	25-35 x 15-25	55-65 x 35-45	45-55 x 70-80	75 x 112	45-55 x 70-80
Ball Size	3	3	3	4	4	5	5
Goal Area (yds)	None	None	None	8 x 4	18 x 6	20 x 8	18 x 6
Penalty Area	n/a	n/a	n/a	34 x 12	34 x 14	44 x 18	34 x 14
Players	1 – 2	3 v 3	4 v 4	7 v 7 (min 4)	9 v 9 (min 7)	11 v 11 (min 7)	6 v 6
Goal Size (ft)	Cones 4-5 apart	4 x 6 or smaller	4 x 6 or smaller	6 x 18	7 x 21 or 6 x 18	8 x 24 or 7 x 21	7 x 21 or 8 x 24
Game Time	30-min individual games; 30-min 2 v 2 mini game	4 x 10 min; 3-5 min break between quarters	4 x 10 min; 3-5 min break between quarters	2 x 25 min; 5-min halftime	2 x 30 min; 5-min halftime	2 x 35 min; 5-min halftime	2 x 35 min; 5-min halftime
Offside	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Opponents Kick-off Distance	n/a	5 yds	5 yds	8 yds	8 yds	10 yds	8 yds
Restart	Coach rolls "new ball"	Player's choice: kick/pass in, dribble in only	Player's choice: kick/pass in, dribble in only	Throw-in, corner kick, goal kick – as appropriate	Throw-in, corner kick, goal kick – as appropriate	Throw-in, corner kick, goal kick – as appropriate	Throw-in, corner kick, goal kick – as appropriate
Free Kicks	n/a	Indirect only	Indirect only	As per Law 12	As per Law 12	As per Law 12	As per Law 12
Referees	None	1/field	1/field	2	1 + 2 OR 2	1 + 2	1 + 2 OR 2

\* Age-pure U7 teams may or may not be created each year depending on number of players. If teams are combined U7/U8, follow U8 rules.

- No alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, marijuana, or illegal drugs are allowed on or near the field.
- Opposing coaches and players must shake hands before and after each match, per MRYSL's Game Day Respect policy.
- Any player suspected of sustaining a concussion or any type of head injury may not return to play or practice until the player has been cleared to return by a medical professional trained in



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concussions and head injuries, and also cleared to return by CYSA/Cal North. **Referees have the authority to end any game where a player suspected of sustaining a concussion fails to leave the field, or a coach refuses to remove the player from the field.**

- Coaches and players who are not on the field must remain in the team's technical area.
- Parents and spectators must remain on the spectator's side of the field, which is on the touchline opposite of the team technical areas.
- Any spectator, coach or other person who fails to comply with the MRYSL Game Day respect rules may be ordered to leave the area by the referee or league field marshal.
- All players get equal playing time
- Slide tackling is not allowed at any age
- Short Sides: If one of the teams is short a full side, then:
  - Option 1: The team that has enough players will agree to play short so the sides are equal.
  - Option 2: The team that has enough players will agree to lend players from its side to the side that is short so both sides are equal. Especially important if one side is very short and the other side is flush with subs.
  - THE SHORT-SIDE RULE IS MANDATORY FOR MRYSL TEAMS – A MRYSL COACH MAY NOT REFUSE TO LEND PLAYERS OR REFUSE TO PLAY SHORT
- At no time will any player that is not on either team's roster be allowed to play in the game.

## U5/U6 Mad Skillz Saturday Game Rules

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On Mad Skillz Saturday, both teams will participate together with the coaches of both teams cooperatively guiding the kids through the warm up and the fun dribbling game portion.

For the first half hour of game time, players and coaches should warm up together and play cooperative games. After the halftime break, coaches will divide their kids into two squads, and with the help of the asst coaches run 2 minute 2v2 mini games on adjacent fields. Every two minutes coaches should change out resting players (subs) for active players. Players may be subbed across fields if desired. At the conclusion of each mini-game participating players should high five.

At no time should there ever be more than 2 players per side, (like 3v3) **please adhere to the 2v2 format.**

There is no score kept. There should be no emphasis placed on winning or losing. Both coaches should be sensitive to the needs of children on both teams and do their best to provide a **good experience for all the children.**

It is not necessary that teams remain separated during the second phase of the hour on Saturday. Mixing teams promotes sportsmanship and the idea we are all playing together, learning together.

Mad Skillz Saturday is a huge opportunity for coaches to share ideas and learn from each other.

MRYSL KIDS FIRST POLICY  
&  
COACH'S CODE OF ETHICS  
Kid Centered/Player Centered Guiding Principles

As an MRYSL Coach I recognize and agree to Protect these  
**PLAYER RIGHTS**

1. The Player's right to play for fun as a child, and not have to compete under adult ideals of competition.
2. The Player's right to equal playing time in games.
3. The Player's right to make their own decisions during a game and not be distracted by constant instructions and shouting during the flow of the game.
4. The Player's right to make mistakes as part of the learning process without constant correction or remonstrations.
5. The Player's right to have fun and enjoyment be the number one priority in both games and practices.
6. The Player's right to have the opportunity to play all positions, and not be pigeon holed in set positions.
7. The Player's right to not be judged, along with the right to be given equal attention and consideration as all other players.
8. The Player's right to be protected from children or adults who would disrupt their positive playing experience.
9. The Player's right to be treated with dignity and respect.
10. The Player's right to be taught that values of sportsmanship, effort and respect are more important than winning.

Coach Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

MRYSL President:



# COACHING PRIORITIES

"1st comes the person, then the player"

## 1. light the fire!

The single most important thing you can do for your players is fuel their passion for sports.

- Create a Joyful environment. Fun is #1, followed by more fun.
- and More Fun.
- Foster a GROWTH MINDSET\* Encourage creativity/improvisation & risk taking. Banish the fear of mistakes.
- Praise EFFORT\* often - there should be no emphasis on results (winning and losing).
- Don't pressure to participate, rather entice and inspire.
- Embrace their LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE BALL.

*\*Google "Carol Dweck Mindset"*

## 2. Teach Sportsmanship

The most important things we can teach are values of sportsmanship, respect, and teamwork (personal effort for the common good)

- Talk, discuss & dialogue sportsmanship themes 2 times every practice and game. Tell stories about sportsmanship.
- Demonstrate, lead by example, show respect to get respect, express genuine concern for your players positive experience.
- Make sure player's "practice" sportsmanship at every opportunity. High fives at the beginning and end of every game or contest. Let them help you set up/take down equipment. Let them practice running their own games, learn to attend to players who are injured (minor accidents) or unhappy, learn to praise teammates during a contest.
- Have kids participate in a **Compliment Circle** at the end of every practice. Make sure everyone gets a compliment. (Developing Empathy for others is a big step at this age-The Golden Rule)
- On game day, by mutual agreement, have your team award a Gold Card (sportsmanship award) to a player from the other team.

### 3. Exercise is empowering

Helping children develop a healthy attitude toward physical fitness is a gift that will enrich their lives.

- Again, Fun is #1. No laps, lines or lectures. No usage of exercise as punishment. Keep em moving/show and go.
- Employ activities that teach coordination and fundamental movement skills, and sharpen reflexes appropriate for that age. They do not need to always be "soccer specific". You are developing "athletes".
- Encourage kids to play or practice on their own and with friends and family.

### 4. Technical Skill is the main focus of soccer players under 14

Ball control skills are the overwhelming athletic priority for most kids. Game intelligence/tactics can and should definitely be taught at the same time, but player development should not be sacrificed for "the win on the weekend."

- Play fun activities that promote good technical skills and play small sided games that give players the freedom to express themselves creatively and explore tactical problems. Use the game as the teacher.
- Do not be in a hurry to force players to give up the ball or to forgo becoming at master at ball control. Let children have these early years to focus on being skillful technicians with the ball. This advanced skill development is what will inspire them to grow and continue on in the game.

### 5. Game Intelligence and team work

Teamwork is as much about forging relationships as tactical components.

- Play teambuilding games that foster relationships, sharing, and a sense of Us.
- Play games that force the players to get their heads up and look, while they are manipulating a ball.
- Keep your Voice out of the flow of group play. Let the team find it's own voice and learn as a group how to solve problems. It's a beautiful thing.
- Play numbers up games to encourage success and build confidence, such as 3v1, 4v2 etc.
- Avoid "too much too soon". If things get too complicated, confusing, or complex, dial it back. Take the "step by step" approach.



## SPORTSMANSHIP

**Definition: Sportsmanship** is an aspiration or ethos that a sport or activity will be enjoyed for its own sake, with proper consideration for fairness, ethics, respect, and a sense of fellowship with one's competitors. (-Wikipedia)

: conduct (as fairness, respect for one's opponent, and graciousness in winning or losing) becoming to one participating in a sport (-Merriam Webster)

Sportsman – A person who exhibits qualities highly regarded in sport, such as fairness, generosity, observance of the rules, and good humor when losing. (-Old English Dictionary)

### MISSION STATEMENT

**The Mad River Youth Soccer League** believes that youth participation in sports is an opportunity to help shape the character of our children in positive ways. As coaches, parents and league administrators we have an obligation to educate our youth in positive ideals of fair play and respect for all involved in the game of soccer.

Signs of a Good Sportsman/woman:

- Plays by the rules.
- Humble in Victory, Gracious in Defeat.
- Treats competitors, teammates and all involved as she/he would want to be treated. (The Golden Rule)
- Uplifts the game by acknowledging good play on all sides.
- Plays with Joy not anger.
- Does not taunt, brag, gloat, or in any way seek to demean or put down a fellow competitor.
- Shows courtesy and good manners on the field, just as one would off the field.
- Keeps a cool head, especially when others are losing theirs.
- Respects the referee's decisions, does not argue, does not blame others for results, takes full responsibility for the outcome of a contest.
- Understands that winning is beyond their control, but playing their best is in their control.
- Strives for the excellence within their capabilities.
- Understands that it is just a game, and that good relationships with those involved matter more than the score of the game.

**PRACTICING SPORTSMANSHIP** Just as we practice dribbling and passing, we need to practice sportsmanship on a regular basis. Demonstrate the behavior you want your players to emulate. Talk with your team on a regular basis and encourage them to share their ideas about sportsmanship in your discussion. Ask them questions about what good sportsmanship is. Promote habits of good sportsmanship. Always have your teammates high five after any scrimmage or game in practice. Play games that promote teambuilding and trust. Promote an environment of respect and support. On game day, go out of your way to demonstrate respect for the opposing team with a positive and cheerful attitude and demeanor. Adhere to [MRYSL's Game Day Respect Campaign](#). Participate in the pre and post-game handshake with the other team. Teach your players how to properly shake hands- a firm grip, a look in the eye, and a sincere greeting. "Good Luck" before the game. "Good Game" when it's over are suggestions. Have a zero tolerance for goofing off during this ritual as it is a sign of disrespect and reflects poorly on your team. Be clear about your expectations for showing respect.

**Buzz Words and Phrases** The words we use can have an impact on the way others think. Referring to our opponents whether in practice or a game as "Friends" changes the way we think about them. "We need our friends to compete against to make us better players." "That was a tough game, our friends really brought out the best in us by challenging us to play our best."

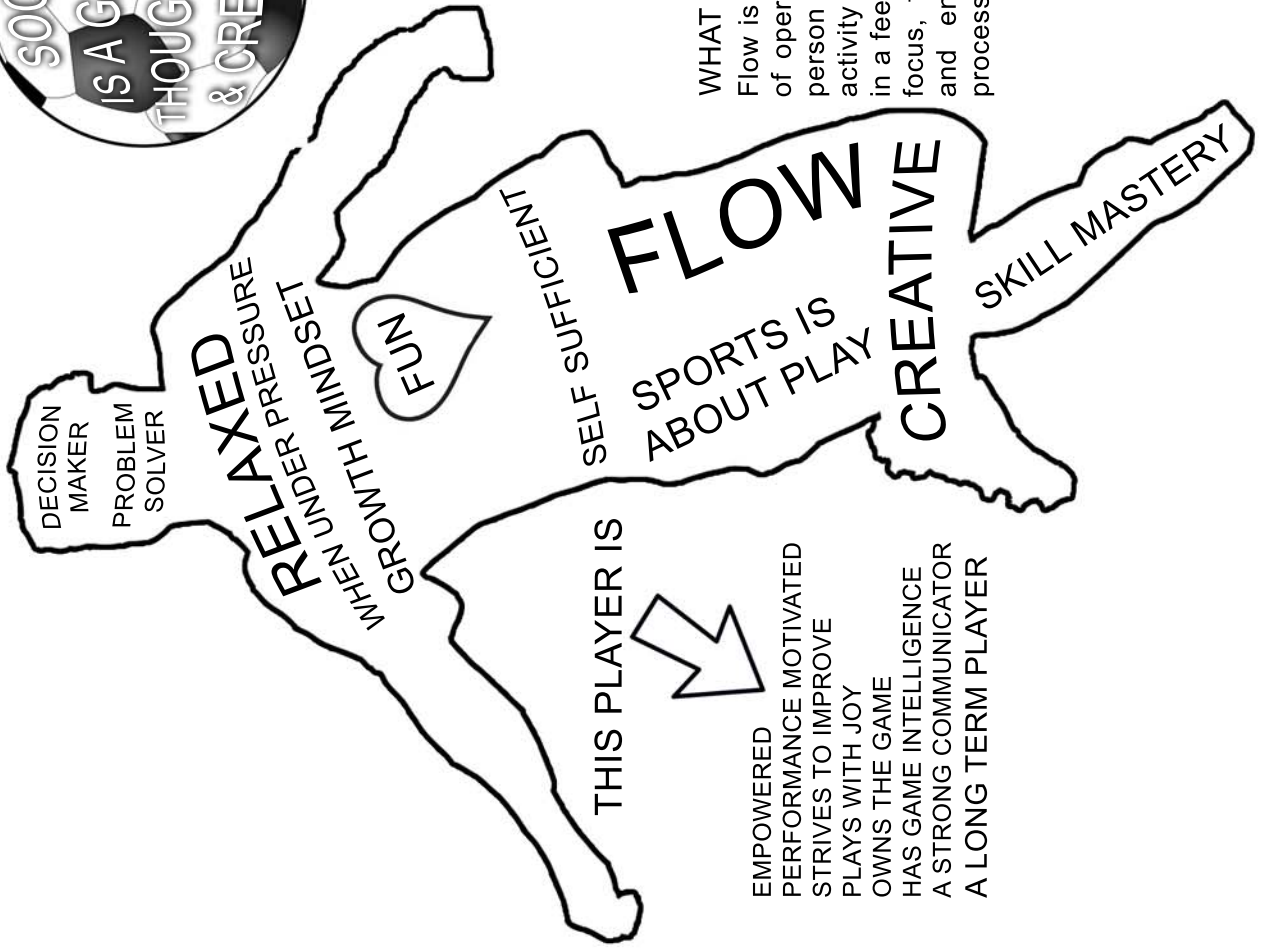
**Honoring Good Sportsmanship** To promote and nurture a culture of good sportsmanship, MRYSL is implementing a peer based award called a "Gold Card". At the conclusion of a game, each team will have the opportunity to award a gold card to a player on the opposing team, if they decide by consensual decision that player demonstrated exemplary sportsmanship. Coaches and referees will also be supplied with gold cards should they wish to recognize players for exemplary sportsmanship.

**Summary** Discuss sportsmanship on a regular basis with your team. Communicate clearly to your team how important it is, including stopping practice and bringing the team in to talk if unsportsmanlike behavior is occurring, or subbing a player out of a game who is displaying poor sportsmanship. Print the list on the left for your player to take home and share with their parents. Seek out ways to reward and recognize sportsmanlike behavior. Have your team make practicing good sportsmanship a part of your normal routine. Demonstrate the behavior you expect to see in your players.

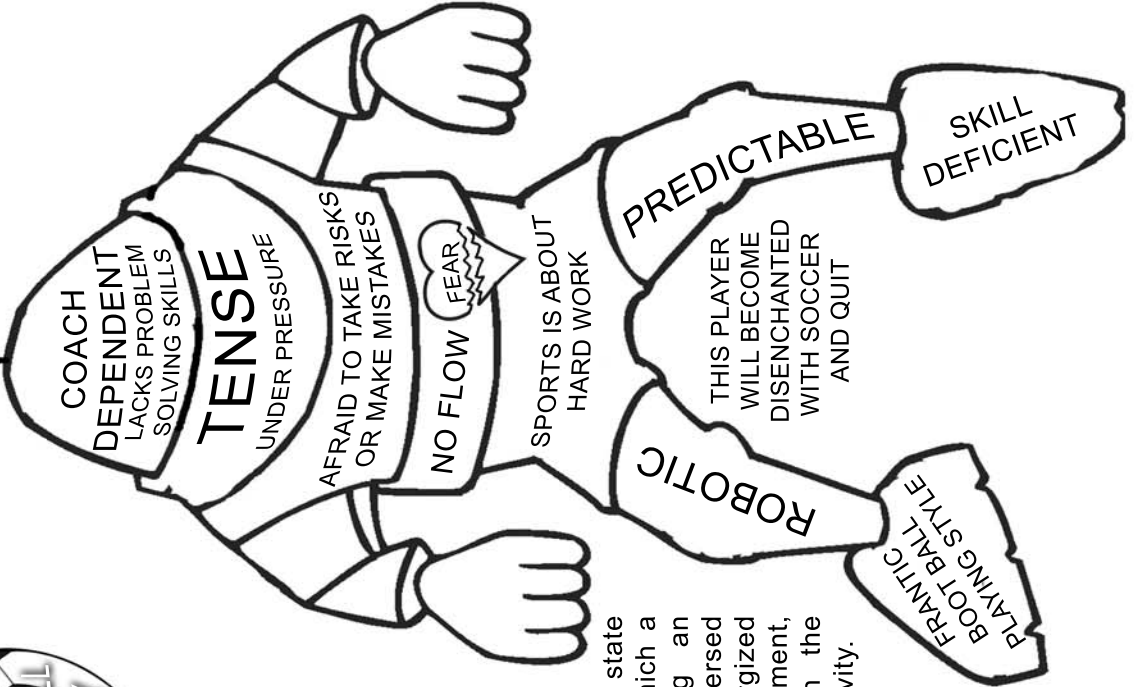
### Links and Resources

<http://www.mrysl.com/respect.htm>  
<https://www.facebook.com/GreatSportsmanship>

**THE PLAYER CENTERED PLAYER**  
(COACH SERVES THE PLAYER)



**THE COMMAND CENTERED PLAYER**  
(PLAYER SERVES THE COACH)



**WHAT IS FLOW?**  
Flow is the mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity.

# PLAYER CENTERED TRAINING IN A NUTSHELL

*I hear and I forget - Lecture*

*I see and I begin to understand - Demonstration*

## ***I do and I will remember - Present a Problem to solve***

*"Games and practices should be a physically and emotionally safe environment where it is ok, and in fact, encouraged to try and fail, over and over again without consequences other than the lessons itself the game has taught as a result of the player's effort and experimentation."*



Place kids in a learning environment and **allow players to make their own choices and solve their own problems.**

Improvisation & creativity is what happens when coaches know when to get out of the player's way. This is called **SKILLFUL NEGLIGENCE.**



Children don't view mistakes as adults do. For them **PLAY** is one big package of experimentation. **Kids naturally have a very healthy attitude toward trial and error.** Adults see "mistakes". Children see **SKILLS** they want to master. Tap into their desire to take risks and keep on trying by de-emphasizing "failure" and emphasizing **EFFORT.**



A player's development is a long road with many twists and turns. In sports kids develop at wildly different rates. For some kids there is a lot of growth at early ages, but for many it is in their mid to late teen years when they hit their stride. Over praising "talented" "promising" players is a disservice to them as, among other things, it creates complacency. Marginalizing players of perceived lesser abilities places road blocks in the path to their full potential. **Always praise EFFORT and give all players equal attention.** Keep the road clear so they have the opportunity to reach for their full potential.



**Kids come to PLAY with a capital P.** Fun is what will keep them coming back, and it is what will motivate them to try, learn, develop and stay in sports. Studies show a joyful environment is the most conducive to creativity and performance. Observe your players - what is the mood in your practices and games? If you are not seeing smiles, try to figure out why, and fast.



## **20 Disadvantages of Spectators Shouting at Players from the Sideline**

1. Pressure should come from the game alone. The Game is the Teacher.
2. Soccer is a team sport, players must learn to communicate with each other and play together. Shouting at them only serves to hinder this process.
3. Players must learn game intelligence by being allowed to make their own choices without outside pressure. A coaches silence is not an invitation for the spectators to takeover.
4. Players have more fun when they are allowed to “own” the game.
5. Being shouted at while a child is “playing” is not fun. “Play” is the key word here. Players who have fun keep playing, want to play more, playing more (practice) is really what makes them better players.
6. Often what is shouted at players during games is irrelevant, such as “get the ball” (as though players do not understand this part of the game) and only serves to detract from the player’s experience.
7. Soccer is a game of thought, skill and creativity, not panic, aggression and “go go go.” How can we get our players to relax on the field, get their heads up and make intelligent choices if we are pushing them to run frantically around the field without thought and getting their heads up to see the field and process the game?
8. Soccer is a possession game, a game of control. Wage war on the words “Boot it!” and cheer for skill, creativity, finesse and control.
9. Practices during the week are for instruction. Game Day is the “test”. Should we give our children the answers while they are taking a test?
10. Our goal is creating independent thinking creative players who can create their own solutions to their problems.
11. Soccer is a game of options and risk vs. reward choices. There is rarely just one “right” choice. Players must be allowed to make their own choices.
12. The sideline view of the entire field is completely different from the player’s limited view of the field from a completely different angle and the player is under pressure from the game, the spectator is not. It’s like being a backseat driver to a car going down the road while standing on the sidewalk.
13. Being able to experiment, be creative and make mistakes is an important part of the learning process and what makes the game fun.
14. Players make up to two decisions a second. Instructions while they are trying to play are a distraction to the learning process and a player’s focus on the game.
15. It is a player’s right to be able to play for fun, to express themselves creatively and not have winning as the most important thing.
16. Mistakes cannot be corrected in the flow of the moment by shouting at players.
17. By shouting at players we are passing on our own anxiety to them. The vibe we should be creating is “relax”.
18. Players are okay with playing their best and giving their best effort, and they have no control over the game’s result. By shouting at players when they are making mistakes we are saying we are not ok with their best effort, the one thing they can control.
19. Coaching is the coach’s job, instruction should come from them alone, other wise it is very confusing to players
20. Whose Game is it?

## WHAT IS YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY?

*"What's your philosophy? What do you teach them?...If you don't address that, then what are you doing? Going from week-to-week trying to win games?"*

-Claudio Reyna U.S. Soccer Technical Director

Everyone has a coaching philosophy. Even the new mom or pop coach who just got roped into coaching their kid's team cuz no one else would. It might be some gas nebula of ideas floating off in space without form, but it's out there. It might start with simply, "I want the kids to have fun," which is a great start, and grow into something much more complex, layered and poignant.

Whatever your philosophy is, it is important to start writing it down. This will become your road map as a coach. It will give you clarity in your mission towards guiding your players, and help you communicate with conviction what your goals are to the parents of the children that are now under your wing. Having parents understand what you are about is crucial in getting their cooperation throughout the season and beyond.

Here are some questions to ask yourself that might help guide you in developing a philosophy. This is not a test. The answers, or thoughts these questions conjure are for you and you alone. You may not have answers to all these questions right now and that's okay. And the answers you do have may change over time, and that is a good thing. A coaching philosophy is a living breathing thing.

~

What did my participation in sports mean to me as a child? If I still play sports, what does it mean to me now? How has it changed or stayed the same?

What are the values I believe sports can teach?

As a coach, how can I ensure those values are taught?

In a negative sports environment, what are the potential pitfalls and consequences? How can I avoid them?

What are the differences between adult values of competitive sports and what children value?

What challenges can I expect to face reconciling those differences in myself and other adults (other coaches and parents)?

What are the key things I can do to meet the specific needs of the children I am coaching?

How will I measure success in the development of my players/team?

How do "winning and losing" fit into my philosophy?

## THE PLAYING ENVIRONMENT

THE IDEAL ENVIRONMENT - *External* environment (The Adults) is calm, supportive and relaxed, allowing the *Internal* environment (the players and the game) to provide the necessary pressure in a constructive way. The Game Becomes The Teacher.

***REMEMBER: If the adults stay calm, positive and relaxed, no matter what,  
The Kids Will Be Alright.***

A good teacher knows that in order to teach, the classroom environment needs to be conducive to learning. Coaching is teaching. Both practices and games are learning environments and, like a teacher in a classroom, a coach should craft those environments with thought and care, and then protect those environments like a mother hawk.

### Teaching Sportsmanship - Priority #1

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," couldn't be more true when it comes to your players and creating a positive environment, where values of sportsmanship are prized. This part of coaching The Whole Player may be the most important thing they can learn from you. We are teaching more than soccer.

1st comes the person, and then the athlete.

### THE COACH-

MODEL The Exemplary Behavior you want your players to emulate.

POSITIVE - Put a smile on, children, especially young ones do not understand shades of gray.

RESPECTFUL - Showing the kids you care about them, you will get back respect in kind.

ENGAGED - Seek out ways to connect with the kids and get to know them.

APPROACHABLE - Body language and facial expression are open and friendly.

ACCESSIBLE - Attention stays focused on the kids, and off distractions.

Be clear with EXPECTATIONS, don't make assumptions.

### THE PLAYER

**Make it a goal to discuss SPORTSMANSHIP at the beginning and then middle water break of every practice and game for just a couple of minutes.** Lead the kids with open ended (instead of yes or no) questions. End every practice and game with a COMPLIMENT CIRCLE. These two things, more than any other will have a dramatic effect on a positive and healthy learning environment.

Play ENLIVEN THE SPIRIT games that emphasize team work. Give your players complete control over these games.

Give kids as much RESPONSIBILITY as they can handle, setting up cones, calling out of bounds etc. Step in when they cannot solve problems on their own or there are safety issues, both physical or emotional.

Have a ZERO TOLERANCE for name calling, teasing, taunting, hitting, pushing, wrestling. Address these issues when they arise with tact and compassion, and keep going back to the goal of teaching sportsmanship at the top of this list. It will squelch a lot of these issues before they can happen.

## Instruction & Flow

Tone of voice, body language & facial expression. These three things, as much as your choice of words, will have a significant effect on your players.

When using your voice, choose your moments carefully, and pay attention to your tone. What is it communicating? Patience, or frustration?

**Try not to break the flow.** This is called Skillful Negligence. Interrupting the playing process to "correct" mistakes will take the players out of "flow", the process of getting absorbed in the play, getting in deep where learning, improvisation, problem solving, creativity, and enjoyment take place. Ask yourself before you speak, Is this the right time? If it isn't, note down what you were observing and think of a way to adjust the game later to address it. CLUE - If you are seeing lots of problems, it may be more productive to adjust the game than try to "explain" to players what you want to see. Is the game too complex, too technically demanding?

Ways to adjust a game:

Size of the grid or field (the bigger the field the less technically demanding)

Number of players per side (unbalanced numbers, like 3v1, will create more success)

Number of goals (multiple goals, 4 instead of 2, opens up more options and opportunities for tactical growth)

Number of balls (increases touches and involvement)

Duration (shortening duration can increase focus and intensity)

Rules or Limitations imposed on the game (ex. "you must touch the ball at least 4 times before you pass.")

Does the game seem fine but there is a lack of engagement enjoyment in the players? Try putting them in charge of the game, letting them monitor the rules, call out of bounds etc. and back out of it and observe.

Be patient, avoid trying to teach too much too soon. Break down big issues into smaller ones and go step by step. Often what is simply required is lots of practice on the players' part, so repetition is key.

Remember, kids don't view Play as something made up of mistakes & success - it's all Play. Framing things as "mistakes" is an adult concept. You can learn to shape your training to target what you observe without calling out your players or team, which will effect their confidence and discourage them from taking risks.

## THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Anything outside the game that can influence the players inside the playing environment is a vital part of the coach's responsibility to control if they can. What many adults forget, or more often misunderstand, is that the kids did not come to "learn and improve" but to Play and Have Fun. But for whatever their motivation, some adults, other than the coach, accept the former viewpoint as an opportunity to "coach" the players. What they do not realize, even with the best of intentions, is that this does more harm than good. Too many cooks truly spoil the soup.

In a game environment a child will make as many as 2 decisions every second they are playing. As the child's coach, ask yourself an important question, should we be making the child's decision making process even more difficult by confusing the issue with multiple instructions, distractions and added pressure? And then follow it with criticisms ("what was that?" or "what were you thinking?") further stifling creativity, risk taking and railroading a child's chance to try something unexpected and truly great? Isn't that what we love about sports? Is this fair to the kids?

We could go on about the importance of flow, and how games are the chance for the kids to show us what they can do. How you the coach are observing, and practicing skillful negligence. But the bottom line truth is that the game belongs to the kids, and that's all we need to know. As adults in charge it is up to us to protect their right to play for fun, because they are unable to protect that right for themselves.

A coach can take these steps to protect the children's playing environment from disruption from other adults and in fact head off a lot of problems at the pass.

- It is important that your assistant coach(s) are on the same page, regarding player centered methodologies, how this affects the way you instruct players, and that you share educational material with them.
- Having a team meeting with your parents as well as putting things in writing will go a long way towards helping your parents understand what is best for the kids. You will find that most or all of them will really appreciate your approach.
- If you have a parent or spectator who strays from time to time and can't help them self to shouting some advice or criticism, usually a friendly reminder from you, in light of the fact that you have already discussed your policies publicly will be enough.

Parents will ask you where the line is. "Well can I even cheer?" You will need to figure out how to answer that one. Here is one way to answer it:

"I really want these kids to learn to get their heads up, and learn to play with calm and intelligence, not frantic, just kicking the ball. I really want them to be able to hear each other and communicate on the field. I also really want the game to be about fun and learning. The end result, whether they win or lose is really not as important to me as how they perform. I don't want to take away the pleasure you get from watching them play. I know your support means a lot to them. What kind of environment do you think is best for learning?"

# FRAMEWORK FOR A PRACTICE

Prior to practice day, write a plan, with contingencies and options; be flexible.

20 to 30 minutes before practice arrive to get ready and prepare to greet players.

10 minutes prior to start time, greet players warmly as they begin to arrive. Have them spend time with their ball (all players must bring a ball) juggling, bounce juggling, dribbling moves.

0 to 5 minutes- Practice starts. Bring players in. Spend just a couple of minutes leading a chat on the day's sportsmanship theme.

5 to 15 minutes - Get em moving. Play Enliven the Spirit (FUN) games that maximize touches on the ball and get smiles going. Play team building games that encourage cooperation.

15 - 25 minutes - Have them partner up and build their own fields to play 1+1 and 1v1 (see document on 1v1). But first have two players demonstrate to the rest of the group.

25 - 30 minutes - Water break as a team. Spend a couple of minutes chatting about the day's sportsmanship theme or tell a brief story related to the theme to engage their imaginations.

30 - 45 minutes - play small sided games in the Big Show format (see further in this document) \*

45 - 55 minutes - small sided scrimmage. Do not exceed numbers that are larger than the team plays with on game day. No coaching during this phase, just observe and let them play. \*

\* Be flexible, if the kids are having fun and getting into the FLOW, let it go longer

55 - 60 minutes - End practice with a cool down compliment circle, where kids practice complimenting each other. Compliment Circle rules: 1) make eye contact with the player you are complimenting. 2) use their name. 3) say something nice about that person regarding effort or sportsmanship. Try to make sure each player receives a compliment.

Notes: If all you do is play Enliven the Spirit games to open and then do small sided scrimmages the rest of practice (in intervals). Is that so bad? Never skip the 2 sportsmanship chats and the compliment circle.



## MRYSL Presents: Intro to Soccer Rules

**Welcome to Soccer! Here's some basic information about the game.**

### The Field

**Touchline:** the long sidelines. The ball is not considered out-of-bounds until it crosses completely over the touchline. If any part of the ball hangs over the touchline, then the ball is still inbounds.

**Goal Line:** the entire line across the ends of the field (not just the line where the goal is). In order for a ball to be out of bounds, or count as a goal, the ball has to completely cross the line. No part of the ball can be hanging over the line.

**Technical Area:** the area next to one touchline where **only** coaches and players can stand.

**Spectator Line:** A line parallel to the touchline on the side opposite of the Technical Area. The spectator line is usually about 5 yards off the touchline.

**Penalty box:** the larger of two rectangles at each end of the field. The goalie can handle the ball within the penalty box. Further, defensive fouls within the penalty box usually results in a penalty kick.

**Goal area (aka Goalie Box)** is the smaller of the two rectangles at each end of the field. It is used primarily to mark where goal kicks should be taken.

### Time

There are no time stoppages and no time-outs. Time keeps ticking away, during substitutions, retrieving the ball, etc. The referee does have the authority to **add** time at the end of each half, usually called "extra time" or "stoppage time". So, if a substitution takes an exceptionally long time, or if it looks like a team is intentionally wasting time, the ref could decide to add an extra couple of minutes on to that half. That is entirely up to the referee.

### Hands

Soccer players (except goalies) aren't supposed to touch the ball with their hands. **Handling** the ball is called a handball.

A ball that simply hits a player's hand or arm is **not** a hand ball; instead, there must be a *purposeful attempt by the player to gain an advantage by using his or her arm or hands*.

Also, there is one situation in which the goalie cannot use hands: the **pass-back**. Goalkeepers cannot pick up a ball that was kicked to them by a teammate. In this case, the goalkeeper must use his feet.

### Throw-ins

A throw-in is taken when the ball completely crosses a **touchline** and leaves the playing field. The ball is thrown in by the team that did not touch the ball last, before it went out of bounds. Two basic soccer rules for a throw-in: (1) both feet must be touching the ground on or behind the touchline, and (2) the ball must be thrown with both hands over the head. (There are more rules for the throw-in.)

A violation of the throw-in rules results in the ball being awarded to the other team. For teaching purposes it is common to allow players under the age of 10 to make more than 1 attempt.

### Corner Kicks & Goal Kicks

A corner kick or goal kick is taken when the ball leaves the field across the **goal line** – the lines at either end of the field.

If the offense touched the ball last, the team on defense restarts play with a goal kick – a kick from the goal box. On a goal kick, if the ball does not leave the penalty area, the kick must be retaken. No one can touch the ball until it leaves the penalty box.

If the defense touched the ball last, play is restarted with a corner kick by the offense. The corner kick is taken from the corner nearest to where the ball left the field.

### Fouls

A player cannot kick, trip, jump at, charge, strike, push, hold, or spit at an opponent.

While competing for the ball, some physical contact or going shoulder-to-shoulder is permitted, until the hands or elbows come up. Soccer can be a physical sport when two opposing players are going for the soccer ball. Whether physical contact constitutes a foul is a judgment call; not all referees will call it the same way.

**Advantage:** A referee may choose to not call an obvious foul if he or she feels that stopping play would take an advantage away from the offended team, such as stopping a fast break or a goal scoring opportunity. Referees have the discretion to call the foul back if they feel the advantage did not materialize.

### Direct and Indirect Free Kicks

The key difference between the two is this: On a direct kick, the kicker can kick the ball **directly** into the goal for a score. On an indirect kick, the ball must be touched by another player from either team before it can go into the goal – the kicker and a second person.

For an indirect kick, the referee will hold one arm straight up in the air until the second person touches the ball. For a direct kick, the referee does not raise an arm.

In general, a direct kick comes from a contact foul or hand ball. Everything else is usually an indirect kick.

In MRYSL's Rec program, there are no direct kicks or penalty kicks in U-8 games, and no direct free kicks in U-10 games.

### **Penalty Kick**

A penalty kick results from a contact foul or hand ball by the defending team within the penalty area – the large box on either end of the field. Note: U-8 games do not have a penalty area or penalty kicks.

The ball is placed on the penalty spot, which is usually 12 yards in front of the center of the goal. (It will be a shorter distance for younger players.)

All players must remain outside the penalty area and the penalty arc until the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper must have both feet on the goal line until the ball is kicked.

If after the ball is kicked, it rebounds off of the goal or the keeper and stays on the field, the ball is "live" and anyone can play it.

### **Two-touch Rule**

A player cannot touch the ball twice in a row when putting the ball in play. You may see it frequently on kick-offs or direct and indirect kicks. If a player barely hits the ball and decides to take another swipe at it, that is a two-touch.

This also applies to throw-ins. A player cannot throw the ball in and then be the first player to kick it.

### **Yellow and Red Cards**

Generally, a yellow card is "shown" to a player if he commits any of these offenses:

- Unsportsmanlike behavior;
- Argues a ref's decision ("dissent"), by word or action
- delays the restart of play
- enters or re-enters the game without the referee's permission
- deliberately leaves the game without the referee's permission.

If a player receives two yellow cards in a match, he is given a red card and ordered to leave the field.

For serious offenses, a red card can be given at any time without the player first receiving a yellow card.

A red card can be given for:

- Serious foul play (a violent foul)
- Violent conduct (any other act of violence)
- Spitting at anyone
- Committing an offense that denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity
- Using offensive, insulting or abusive language or gestures
- Receiving a second yellow card in one match

When a player gets a red card, they must leave the game and their team must play short. An ejected player cannot be replaced during that game. The ejected player will be required to sit out at least one more game – perhaps more, depending on the violation.

### **Offside**

The offside rule is perhaps one of the most complex rules in soccer. The following is a general introduction to the rule; keep in mind that offside often is a judgment call by the Ref (with assistance from the AR).

If your child is playing in Rec at U-10 or under, you're in luck – you don't have to worry about the offside rule. Offside is called at U-12 and older in Rec, and applies to all Competitive division games.

To be offside, a player must:

- Be in an offside position,
- At the time the ball is kicked or passed, **and**
- Be involved in active play.

A player is in an offside position if they are nearer to their opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second to last opponent.

A few other key points: Offside does not apply in a corner kick, goal kick, or throw-in, or to a player who dribbles into an offside position, or in one's own half of the field.

*For more info, please visit:*

<http://www.soccer-for-parents.com/soccer-rules.html>

<http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/footballdevelopment/technicalsupport/refereeing/laws-of-the-game/index.html>



## How Does the Game Become the Teacher? (mistakes to avoid)

Avoid coaching the players during the run of play. Let the game be the teacher. This is play time. Play time is learning time.

The biggest mistake, you or any parent can make is to yell, "go go go. Get the ball, cmon get it," or any other likeminded phrase egging the kids on.

Soccer, especially at this level, is not a game of aggression.  
Soccer is game of Thought, Skill & Creativity, not a game of hustle and reaction.

Johnny had the ball facing the other goal, but in front of him were not only the two players from the other side, but his own teammate anxiously vying for the ball. Feeling the pressure, trying to break through this knot of players, little 5 year old Johnny decided to turn around and go the other way. It looked to the coach, and the spectators that Johnny was confused and about to score on his own goal. You're going the wrong way was on the lips of every adult. But Johnny started to turn, dribbling the ball in a semi-circle. The little pursuers kept after him, but soon found themselves on the wrong side of Johnny as he had maneuvered a 180 degree turn and now dribbled toward a now unguarded goal.

Suzie, had learned the hard way once to often, that if she ran out too fast at Pablo, coming toward her with the ball, he would just dribble around her and score. So this time she decided to stand and wait for him. When Pablo got close to Suzie and saw she had stopped, he stopped too. Usually getting past Suzie was easy, but this time he wasn't sure what to do. All the adults watching started yelling at the kids. "Go Pablo, go!" and "Suzie, don't just stand there, get the ball, don't let him score." Suzie caved from the sideline pressure first and jumped at Pablo. Ahh, just what Pablo was waiting for. He dribbled around her and scored. Suzie began to cry. 1<sup>st</sup> an adult had given her bad advice, and she had failed the adult as well by letting Pablo score. Suzie's instinct to let Pablo make the first move had been a good one, one the game had taught her. Pablo had also learned a defender is most vulnerable when they are committed.

The game forces kids to make decisions on a moment to moment basis. Making mistakes is how they learn. Let the kids play. Let the game be the teacher.

Remember soccer is not a game of aggression, it is a game of Thought, Skill and Creativity.



## GAME DAY RESPECT CAMPAIGN



*Mission – To establish a uniform code of conduct for Coaches, Players, Parents and Referees that places sportsmanship first over winning.*

These guidelines or protocols are meant to specifically address proper behavior on game day -- sportsmanship! Most of these ideas are already adopted by our League and other local youth soccer leagues, but not necessarily as policy where there can be a focused effort on public expectations of behavior, uniform education and enforcement.

These policies have been adopted by the MRYSL Board, and apply to all MRYSL teams, from competitive to rec. These policies should also be presented to visiting teams as shared reasonable expectations of behavior.

*Blue type denotes responsibilities of the league/field administrator.*

*Mad River Youth Soccer League, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, teaching soccer to youth aged 4 to 19 in northern Humboldt County, California. More information about MRYSL can be found at [www.mrysl.org](http://www.mrysl.org)*



## PART 1 – COACHES

Coaches are the ethical and moral leaders of a team, both Players and Parents follow their lead. They have the most influence on the behavior of all involved.

On game day a coach's goal should be to provide a safe and fun environment. To adhere to the Laws of the Game and promote fair play, high standards of behavior and place the well being, safety and enjoyment of each player over winning.

### Coaches On Game Day –

#### DO:

- Arrive early to the game site and check the safety of field conditions. Draw any concerns to the attention of the facility administrator and/or game officials
- Make contact with the other coach and game official, introduce oneself and wish good game to all.
- Have only properly cleared personnel/assistant coaches in the technical area and bench side of the field. *It is suggested the league provide simple ID cards to properly vetted and cleared coaches, assistant coaches and team managers/parents, even for D4.*
- During game keep all instruction and commentary to team positive.
- AS per FIFA rules behave in a responsible manner, with only one coach giving instructions from the team's technical area at a time. It is recommended a coach stay seated in Team technical/bench area unless giving instructions. *It is each league organizations responsibility to demark a clearly designated technical area, (and provide each team with a bench if possible.) Technical area as per CYSA guidelines - **PLAYER/COACHES AREA** - Twenty (20) yards long. Beginning at the halfway line go ten (10) yards down the touch line into each half of the field.*
- During game, demonstrate praise for good play on both teams.
- Be prepared to assist the referee with unsporting behavior from parents, bench personnel, and/or players. *(See notes regarding this at the end of section 5, Field Administrators).*

- In the event of a lopsided game, the coach of the leading team should consider making adjustments such as rotating defensive and attacking players, and/or playing a player short if the number of subs is manageable.

- Post game, shake hands of opposing team, coach and officials.

- Fill out Referee evaluations card supplied by the league and give or mail in to league official.

#### DON'T

- Use abusive language or behavior towards any player, coach, parent or official.
- Allow unauthorized adults to reside in team technical area.
- Publicly criticize the match official, ESPECIALLY in front of players or parents - this includes post game, in front of players or parents and not limited to blaming the match official for an undesired outcome.
- Criticize players for perceived mistakes. *Players know when they have made a mistake, they should not be publicly called on it. They need encouragement, not criticism, to continue exploring the game without fear.*
- Over-directing players while they are on field of play (a constant stream of commentary or instruction.) *Let the players own the game. If needed, give guidance when required and then, as per FIFA rules, sit back down on the team bench.*
- Enter the field during the game without the official's permission.



## GAME DAY PART 2 – PLAYERS

### DO

- Arrive early to game site as per coaches instructions, well rested, fed and properly equipped.
- Listen to and obey the coach
- Listen to and obey the match official
- Pre game - Shake hands with the other team and the match officials. *This would be facilitated by the match official at the touchline near the midfield stripe. This protocol would be a Key element of the Respect Campaign. It has been adopted by most top professional leagues and is shown to improve sportsmanship and respect for the other team.*
- Compete to the best of one's ability in a clean & fair manner. Treat other players like you would like to be treated. Show respect to get respect. Look out for the safety of other players on the field by keeping control of your body and actions.
- Acknowledge good play and effort on both teams & cheer in a positive and constructive manner.
- Stay seated on the team bench when not in the game unless warming up, or readying to substitute for a teammate.
- Execute a post game cheer for the other team and officials, shake hands of all.

### DON'T

- Play in an unfair manner, cheat, or intentionally foul or try to hurt another player
- Use offensive, abusive or taunting language or behavior towards any player, coach or official, nor tolerate it amongst your teammates. *Peer pressure is one of the most effective tools against bullying.*
- Publicly Criticize the match official, other team or coach



## GAME DAY PART 3 – PARENTS

Parents play a huge role in ensuring that game day is a safe and fun environment for their kids by modeling a calm and supportive presence.

### DO

- Make sure your child arrives early, rested and nourished to the field as per the coach's instructions.
- During the game, remain in the spectators area where provided. *(Leagues should have a clearly demarked spectator area, set back from the touchline as per CYSA guidelines, between 5 and 10 yards away.)*
- Acknowledge good play from both teams
- Respect the coach's choices. Encourage and support coaching decisions regarding your player as an opportunity for all involved to learn.
- Respect the official's decisions. Officials are interested in player safety and fairness according to the rules for both teams. Support them with positive behaviors. If possible, make an effort to learn the laws of the game and league rules. *The number one reason referees leave the sport (at all ages and levels) is abusive conduct toward them by parents, players, and sometimes coaches.*

### DON'T

- Coach or attempt to coach the players, or tell them what to do during the game. *Game Day belongs to the kids. Kids will have more fun and develop as players better in a game environment absent from distractions. Parents can help protect the game environment by modeling a quiet, but supportive presence.*
- Criticize players for perceived mistakes. *Players know when they have made a mistake, they should not be publicly called on it. They need encouragement, not criticism, to continue exploring the game without fear.*
- Engage in or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language or behavior toward any other parents, players, officials, or coaches. *Emotions are a natural response to any contest, but we must all do our part to ensure the players have a safe environment. That means monitoring our own behaviors and knowing how to respond to others who may be acting inappropriately.*
- Criticize the match official, or in any way foment dissent among the spectators or players. For player safety and fairness the official's full attention must be on the moment to moment action. Don't be a distraction with negative commentary.
- Post game, publicly criticize any player, coach or official or in private to one's child. *All of these above items, if present, will make for an intense and unsafe environment for your player.*



## GAME DAY PART 4 – OFFICIALS (Referees)

Officials can have a significant impact on the tone of a game by simply treating players and coaches with respect, even when calling infringements or making cautions.

### DO

- Arrive early, to inspect the field & check in with coaches and league officials. Warm-up, and prepare to ref the game. Make sure you have the equipment needed such as league game cards, whistles, time piece, yellow and red cards. If doing multiple games, make sure you have food and water.
- Pre-game communicate expectations to coaches and players for a fair and safe game. Tell the coaches you will ask for their help to have them remove any spectator or player for unsporting or poor conduct. Remind them the game will not continue until the person(s) are removed. (See commentary regarding this “Ask, Tell, Remove” policy at the end of this document.)
- At coin toss have captains introduce themselves and shake hands.
- Administer pre-game handshake between the two teams. (see Game Day part 2 – Players).
- During game communicate clearly with players when making calls or stopping play, by providing a loud, clear whistle, a directional signal, and a verbal cue (especially for younger players).
- Treat coaches and players with respect. Model the respectful attitude you want players and coaches to show by setting the example yourself. Be calm and clear when you confront disrespect.
- Be positive and upbeat

- Stay focused on the game at hand. Give the game your full attention. Your body language, your uniform (clean and complete), and your attitude should confirm that you are present and ready to work.
- Report any foul or abusive language or behavior on the part of coaches or parents to the league official. If you do not, the behavior will continue and other refs will have to deal with it later on. Know who to call and to whom to report. [See section 5 – Field Administrator.](#)

### DO NOT

- Tolerate abusive or foul language or behavior on the field. Stop the game, speak to players and coaches. Use the “ask, tell, and remove policy” – **see end of this document-** for coaches and spectators. Use progressive discipline for players unless immediate send-off (red card) is appropriate.
- Engage in arguments about any call with players, parents or coaches. Encourage players and coaches to move forward with the game and put it behind them. If anyone continues to argue, question, or dissent then use appropriate disciplinary action up to and including removal (send-off for players).
- Engage in abusive, insulting or foul language or behavior toward any player, coach or parent. Model and set the example of how you want others to act.



## MRYSL RECREATIONAL PROGRAM 2014 POLICY ON HEADERS

*Children under 14 should not head the ball, in games or in practice. Instead, in situations in which children might be tempted to use their head, children should be redirected into receiving and controlling the ball with their chest, thighs or feet.*

Continuing in its efforts to provide a safe and fun environment for children to learn and play soccer, MRYSL's recreational program is joining U.S. Women's Soccer legend Brandi Chastain and Parents and Pros for Soccer (PASS) in their campaign to reduce concussions and brain injuries in children, by eliminating heading by children under 14. TBI (traumatic brain injury) can result from sudden, severe blows to the head and from accumulated repetitive head movements.

Excerpt from PASS's press release:

"As a professional, and now a parent and coach, I believe that the benefits of developing heading skills as children are not worth the thousands of additional concussions that youth soccer players will suffer. As a parent, I won't allow my children to head the ball before high school, and as a coach I would prefer my players had focused solely on foot skills as they develop their love of the game. I believe this change will create better and safer soccer," said Chastain, a two-time FIFA Women's World Cup champion and two-time gold medalist who is best remembered for scoring the game-winning goal for the US on a penalty kick against China in 1999."

"Studies show that at least 30% of concussions in soccer are caused by heading a ball or attempting to head a ball and colliding with another player... this is a clear opportunity to make soccer safer without hurting the game," -Dr. Robert Cantu, clinical professor of neurosurgery at Boston University School of Medicine

Cindy Parlow Cone, who also won two gold medals and a World Cup as a prolific header before retiring due to post-concussion syndrome, believes postponing headers will create better soccer players. "With good coaching, heading skills can be learned during the high school years. Up until the high school age, the focus should be on coordination, technical skills and spatial awareness. Delaying the teaching of heading skills, while still preparing players for heading by teaching jumping and landing and strengthening the neck, not only will help make the sport safer but also is developmentally appropriate,"

We strongly encourage parents and coaches to go to

<http://www.sportslegacy.org/>

to learn more.



## Policy Against Abuse

Adopted 7/12/11

The Mad River Youth Soccer League, Inc. is committed to providing a safe environment for its members and participants, and to preventing abusive conduct in any form. Every member of this organization is responsible for protecting our participants and ensuring their safety and well being while involved in sponsored activities.

To this end, we have established the following guidelines of behavior and procedures for our staff, volunteers and participants. All members of this organization, as well as parents, spectators and other invitees are expected to observe and adhere to these guidelines.

1. Abuse of any kind is not permitted within our organization. This means we do not tolerate physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse or misconduct from our players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents or spectators.
2. Physical and sexual abuse, including, but not limited to, striking, hitting, kicking, biting, indecent or wanton gesturing, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, are strictly prohibited within our organization.
3. Emotional abuse or verbal abuse is also prohibited. These include, but are not limited to such forms of abuse as: insulting, threatening, mocking, demeaning behavior, or making abusive statements in regard to a person's race, gender, religion, nationality/ethnicity, sex or age.
4. We are committed to providing a safe environment for our players, participants and staff. We do so by appointing all coaches, officials and volunteers – and anyone else affiliated with our organization – as protection advocates. Every member of this organization is responsible for reporting any cases of questionable conduct or alleged mistreatment toward our members by any coach, official, volunteer, player, parent, sibling or spectator.
5. Buddy System: We recommend that every activity sponsored by our program put a Buddy System in place. Each youth participant should be assigned a buddy during sponsored activities. No child should go anywhere – to the bathrooms, locker rooms, or other location – without his or her buddy.
6. To further protect our youth participants, as well as our coaches, officials and volunteers, no adult person should allow him/herself to be alone with a child during sponsored activities. In particular, we recommend that coaches or other adult members of this organization:
  - Do not drive alone with a child participant in the car;
  - Do not take a child alone to the locker room, bathrooms or any other private room;
  - Provide one-on-one training or individual coaching with the assistance of another adult or the child's Buddy;
  - If you must have a private conversation with a youth participant, do it within view of others, in the gym or on the field, instead of in a private office
  - Coaches and other adult members of this organization should not socialize individually with the participants outside of sponsored activities.



7. When traveling overnight with youth participants, coaches should not be alone in a room with only one youth participant (unless it is the coach's own child). Children should be paired up with other children of same gender and similar age group.
8. We want to empower our children to trust their feelings and let them know that their concerns, fears and hopes are important by listening to them. Open communication between children and parents, or between children and other adults in the organization may help early warning signs of abuse to surface.
9. We encourage parents to become as active as possible in sponsored activities, games, practices and other events. The more the parents are involved, the less likely it is for abusive situations to develop.
10. We will respond quickly to any and all allegations of abuse within this organization. This information will be communicated to the authorities for investigation and will be reviewed by the organization's directors. The alleged offender will be notified of such allegations promptly.
11. Mad River Youth Soccer League will provide an Incident Reporting Form, available for anyone associated with MRYSL to formally make a report of suspected abuse. Incident Reporting Forms that involve abuse will be investigated by the chair of the particular program involved, and the results of the investigation will be reviewed by the board of directors in a closed session. MRYSL also has a Protest, Appeals and Discipline Committee (PAD), which can be invoked by mailing a written complaint to MRYSL requesting a PAD hearing. More information on the PAD Committee is available on the MRYSL website.
12. Any person accused of sexual or physical abuse may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be suspended by the board until the matter is resolved. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of the organization and could be harmful to the participants. A person who is accused but later cleared of charges, may apply to be reinstated within the organization. Reinstatement is not a right, and no guarantee is made that he or she will be reinstated to his/her former position.
13. We promote good sportsmanship throughout the organization and encourage qualities of mutual respect, courtesy and tolerance in all participants, coaches, officials and volunteers. We advocate building strong self-images among the youth participants. Children with a strong self-image may be less likely targets for abuse; similarly, they may be less likely to abuse or bully others around them.



## BULLYING

**What is Bullying:** Bullying is an intentional, aggressive and repeated behavior that involves an imbalance of power or strength. It can be physical, verbal, or both.

Bullying can occur at any age, between teammates, between a parent and child, between a coach (or other adult) and a player, or with referees.

Bullying is a particularly damaging form of abuse. **MRYSL does not tolerate bullying in any form, for any reason.**

Some coaches and parents believe that yelling at, embarrassing and insulting young children will motivate them to practice harder or do better in games. In truth, threats, intimidation, fear, guilt, shame, and name-calling are not motivators for anyone. Instead of motivating children to perform better, these tactics lead to burnout, rebellion and a hatred of a once-loved sport, and can leave scars that may last a lifetime. Fear in particular is a mental game killer for a player. To really benefit from and enjoy sports, young athletes need to feel confident and safe.

Verbal abuse can lead to anxiety, social withdrawal, and nightmares, and can negatively impact the psychological health of children. Words do hurt.

### Signs of Bullying

In addition to the obvious signs of abuse – name calling, insults, cruel language – other signs that a child may be a target of bullying include:

- Has unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches;
- Has few, if any friends, with whom he or she spends time;
- Seems afraid of going to practice or games, and taking part in organized activities with peers;
- Finds or makes up excuses as to why they can't go to school, practice or a game;
- Has suddenly lost interest in soccer;
- Appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed.
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem

### How You Can Help (Coaches and Parents):

Set a *zero tolerance policy* from the very beginning of your season. **In your practices & games do not allow taunting, teasing or physical contact that is not associated with the game, or is not clearly positive behavior (such as high fives, hand shakes etc.) no matter how "harmless" in appearance.** If you see signs of bullying, step in immediately and put a stop to it. Most importantly, lead by your own behavior.

Your players will look to you for cues or examples of how to behave in particular circumstances. Your tone, body language, and other nonverbal messages set the standards of behavior for your team.

If you treat all children and adults (including referees) with respect and dignity, your players are much more likely to treat you and each other with respect as well. But if you tease, mock or insult a player, you are giving permission for your players to do the same, to you and to each other. You may not mean to cause any harm -- but you are inadvertently setting the standard that verbal abuse is OK.

It can be very difficult to treat other adults with respect when they are being disrespectful to you. But by setting the example for your players, you can help break the cycle of bullying.

Do not turn a blind eye to bullying and dismiss your players' behavior. Creating a bully-free environment is the responsibility of every youth sports coach, parents and league volunteer.

You have the power to protect your players and ensure that everyone is respected and feels safe on and off the field. If you are having trouble with bullying on your team, please ask us for help!

*The above information came from the following sources:*

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/>

[www.selfgrowth.com/articles/Help\\_My\\_Coach\\_is\\_a\\_Bully\\_The\\_Consequences\\_of\\_Verbally\\_Abusive\\_Coaching.html](http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/Help_My_Coach_is_a_Bully_The_Consequences_of_Verbally_Abusive_Coaching.html)

[www.stompoutbullying.org/adults\\_tips\\_bullyingsigns.php](http://www.stompoutbullying.org/adults_tips_bullyingsigns.php)

[www.sportpsychologytoday.com/youth-sports-psychology/how-bully-coaches-affect-athletes-mental-game/](http://www.sportpsychologytoday.com/youth-sports-psychology/how-bully-coaches-affect-athletes-mental-game/)

[blog.sportssignup.com/blog/bid/136628/What-Can-Coaches-and-Volunteers-Do-to-Prevent-Bullying-in-Youth-Sports](http://blog.sportssignup.com/blog/bid/136628/What-Can-Coaches-and-Volunteers-Do-to-Prevent-Bullying-in-Youth-Sports)

<http://www.humankinetics.com/asep-successful-coaching-webinar-series/asep-successful-coaching-webinar-series/bully-prevention-and-intervention-realistic-strategies-to-protect-student-athletes-and-students>



## CONCUSSIONS

**FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S SAFETY, MRYSL URGES YOU TO TAKE THE ONLINE CONCUSSION TRAINING COURSE**  
[www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online\\_training.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html)

If you suspect that a player may have a concussion,

**DO NOT LET THE PLAYER RETURN TO THE GAME OR ENGAGE IN OTHER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY until the player has been cleared by medical personnel.**

Returning to physical activity too soon can lead to significant, permanent brain damage.

### Signs of a Concussion

Here's what to look for:

*A forceful bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head;*  
*AND*

*A change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.*

#### WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

#### WHAT THE CHILD MIGHT REPORT:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"

You can't see a concussion. Some athletes may not experience and/or report symptoms until hours or days after the injury.

The good news: most children with a concussion will recover quickly and fully. But for some children, signs and symptoms of concussion can last for days, weeks, or longer.

### What Should I Do If I Suspect A Concussion?

If you suspect that a child has suffered a concussion, implement this **4-step action plan**:

- 1) **Remove** the child from play and practices. When in doubt, keep the athlete out.
- 2) Ensure that the child is **evaluated** by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion. Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself.
- 3) Inform the child's **parents** about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion. Make sure they know that the child should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.
- 4) **Keep** the child out of games, practices, and all other physical exertion until a health care professional says the child is symptom-free and it's OK to return to play.

The fourth step is very important, but also very hard to implement, especially if the child seems to be doing OK and *really* wants to play. But, **a repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first**—usually within a short period of time (hours, days, or weeks)—**can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems**. In rare cases, repeat concussions can result in edema (brain swelling), permanent brain damage, and even death.

### Baseline Testing

Baseline testing is a pre-season exam conducted by a trained health care professional. Baseline tests are used to assess an athlete's balance and brain function, as well as for the presence of any concussion symptoms. Results from baseline tests (or pre-injury tests) can be used and compared to a similar exam conducted by a health care professional during the season if an athlete has a suspected concussion.

In Humboldt County, contact Beth Larson at 707-826-3533 or [Elizabeth.Larson@humboldt.edu](mailto:Elizabeth.Larson@humboldt.edu) for more information on **baseline testing**.

*For more info, please visit:*  
[www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html)



## FIRST AID AND CPR TRAINING

MRYSL strongly encourages each team to have at least one person – coach, assistant coach or team manager – trained in first aid and CPR.

Here are some local organizations that offer First Aid/CPR classes. Please check directly with the organizations for class schedules and costs. **Please note:** MRYSL does not endorse or recommend any particular provider; the following is simply a listing of organizations that provide training.

### **Humboldt Co. Red Cross:**

[http://www.redcross.org/courses/index.jsp?\\_requestid=944091](http://www.redcross.org/courses/index.jsp?_requestid=944091)

The Red Cross has an on-line course focusing on first aid training for youth coaches (but it does not include CPR training). They also offer an all-day in-person course in Adult and Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED.

### **NorCal Safety (McKinleyville):**

<http://www.norcalssafety.com/monthclass.html>

Offers an American Heart Assoc. class in CPR, as well as basic first aid class.

### **HealthSPORT**

707-822-3488

<http://healthsport.com/clubs/arcata/>

Offers a 3-hour Medic First Aid Certification in CPR and AED.

### **City Ambulance of Eureka:**

<http://www.cityambulance.com/TrainingCenter.htm>

(707) 445-4907

Offers classes that are taught by certified nurses, paramedics, and EMTs. Courses meet OSHA requirements for mandatory workplace and CPR training.

### **Eureka Fire Department:**

<http://www.ci.eureka.ca.gov/depts/fire/cpr/>  
(707) 441-4000

*First Aid Basic:* This eight hour class consists of four hours of adult CPR and four hours of basic first aid. The class is offered most months on the 2nd Saturday of the month, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The cost of the class is \$40.00 per person.

*Care Plus CPR:* This four hour basic CPR class includes adult, child and infant CPR. The class is offered the fourth Tuesday evening of each month, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The cost of the class is \$20.00 per person.

### **American Sport Education Program**

[http://www.asep.com/courseInfo/purchase\\_courseinfo.cfm?courseID=182&format=&usaw\\_status=unknown&orgLetter=A&orgID=0](http://www.asep.com/courseInfo/purchase_courseinfo.cfm?courseID=182&format=&usaw_status=unknown&orgLetter=A&orgID=0)

On-line course in sport first aid covers protocols for conducting emergency action steps and providing life support; conducting the physical assessment; administering first aid for bleeding, tissue damage, and unstable injuries; moving an injured athlete; and returning athletes to play. Cost: \$50.00

### **National Center for Sports Safety**

<http://www.sportssafety.org/content/Programs/PREPARE.aspx>

On-line course was created to educate coaches, parks and recreation staff, parents, and other volunteers on the basics of sports safety and injury prevention, as well as what to do (and what not to do) until professional help arrives in case an injury occurs. Cost: \$41.00

For more info on first aid and sports injuries, please visit:

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/topic.cfm?topic=A00307>

[www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html)



# MRYSL Incident Report

*Purpose: To prevent recurrence, not place blame.*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Injured Party: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Coach: \_\_\_\_\_ Team Involved: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Injury: \_\_\_\_\_ Conduct: \_\_\_\_\_

[if injury required more than first aid, a CYSA Incident Report must also be completed and submitted to the MRYSL office]

Describe what happened: [attach more pages, if necessary]

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Witnesses: Name and Phone #:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What action was taken? [attach more pages if needed]

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Signature of CD or Rec Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of injured party: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the accused: \_\_\_\_\_



## COMPLAINTS

What To Do If You Have A Complaint

### For Coaches/ Team Managers:

1. **Talk:** If you are having a problem with parents, players or other coaches, first try to speak with the parents, players or coach about it.

**Exception:** If you are having problems with a referee, do **NOT** speak with the referee – instead, please let the ref assignor or your program coordinator know about it.

2. **Supervisor:** If, after talking with the person with whom you are having difficulties, your complaint is not resolved, then speak to the person in charge of the program.

League President: Shannon Hall, [littlelearners.shannon@gmail.com](mailto:littlelearners.shannon@gmail.com)

3. **Formal Complaint:** If you wish to pursue a formal complaint, MRYSL has a “Protest Appeals and Discipline” procedure. This process can be used to address any violation of MRYSL, CalNorth/CYSA, or US Club rules or policies.

To invoke this procedure, all you need to do is mail your written complaint to the MRYSL office, providing as much detail about your complaint as possible. In about 30 days, a hearing will be held, during which you can present your complaint and witnesses; then the person you are complaining about will have an equal amount of time to present his or her side of the event. Three panelists will then decide whether any rules or policies were violated, and if so, what the proper amount of discipline is, if any.

More information on the PAD process is available at CalNorth CYSA’s website, <http://www.calnorth.org/>

4. **Policies:** If you have a complaint or concern about MRYSL rules or policies, please contact the MRYSL Board of Directors. You can also attend one of our monthly board meetings – we always set aside some time at the beginning of the meeting to hear from MRYSL members or the public.

**Mad River Youth Soccer League**  
P.O. Box 103, Arcata CA 95518  
[www.mrysl.net](http://www.mrysl.net) 707.822.3333  
A non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization

Keep the Ball Rolling...

