

Team SAGE Representatives



Thank you !! By volunteering (or allowing yourself to be volunteered), you are helping us provide a better sports experience for our children.

Kids consistently say that their main goal in playing sports is having fun. If we adults can subdue our egos, eliminate the disrespect for officials and others, and stop putting pressure on kids, their youth sports experience can be a good one, regardless of whether they are great athletes. Most adults behave well but a relative few can influence our children's behavior.

Many of the difficulties arise because we adults sometimes overemphasize the importance of winning. We also may have unrealistic expectations about our children's ability and their chances of playing in or after high school.

In these three pages, we will describe how you can be helpful. If at any time, you have questions about SAGE, **you can email Mike Schapiro, the league's SAGE coordinator (mike-s888@comcast.net)**. Of course your club officials will also be able to help in many cases but you can always contact Mike.

The topics we will cover are

Field Signs

SAGE buttons

What To Do if a Problem Arises at a field

Field Signs

We ask that you assume responsibility for making sure SAGE signs are posted at the fields your team plays on. **Here is a suggested procedure but if your club has another process in place, that is of course fine (Some clubs with a CLUB SAGE COORDINATOR have one or two specific people responsible for signs.):**

1) We provided about five signs PER FIELD to each club. The idea was to put one each near each team bench and three on the spectator side. There are two different signs. One says "If it's not nice, please don't say it. Thank you." The other says, "Kids are embarrassed when we criticize them, referees, coaches, or spectators."

If they're not posted already, ask your coach or manager to find out where the signs are. Help post the signs as directed by club or your team's officials, unless they already have people doing that. If there is no natural barrier to attach them to, one option is the inexpensive plant stakes you can obtain at any garden store. Mailing tape works well on the stakes. Attaching the signs to dogs might be fun but is not recommended.

If your club or manager finds out they don't have signs, email Mike Schapiro at mike-s888@comcast.net and he will get them to you.

2) IF SIGNS CAN REMAIN UP FOR THE WHOLE SEASON, your only responsibility is to confirm that they are up when you attend your games. **If they are not up by the weekend of March 20th or the second weekend of games after you first get the use of your fields, whichever is later, email Mike for more.**

3) IF SIGNS MUST BE PUT UP AND TAKEN DOWN ON EACH GAME DAY because of town, county or board of ed rules, **get a master schedule of your club's games with times and locations or find it on its web site, if it has a web site, so you'll be sure whether your game is the first or last at that field. Occasionally, an unusual scheduling situation can result in a following game not starting right after yours, so you won't always be able to tell by seeing players from other teams arrive during your game.** Your coach can help you with this.

Also get a list of each team's SAGE reps. Email Mike if your club reps do not have an up-to-date list.

If your team plays first at the field, make arrangements to get the signs from the previous game day's SAGE reps.

4) IF SIGNS ARE NOT PERMITTED AT ALL ON A FIELD, email Mike with the field name and town. Perhaps we can get a waiver since most such bans are mainly aimed at political signs.

5) If signs deteriorate, email Mike for more.

SAGE Buttons

We ask that you wear the buttons however since we didn't give out buttons for new reps at our club meeting on March 4th, we'll have to get them to you later.

The buttons indicate your support for the program and that you are helping the league provide a better experience for our kids.

What To Do if a Problem Arises at a Field

If someone is criticizing players or referees or otherwise acting in a negative emotional manner, that may not be the best time to talk to them. Remember that there should be NO CONFRONTATIONS. We do NOT want you to be an enforcer of the program during games. Think of yourself as a gentle reminder of the program.

- 1) If it's someone from your team, and you feel comfortable talking to them during the game, at half-time, after the game, or at practice, pleasantly suggest that he/she relax and enjoy the game. Also when conversing away from the game, you can mention that the kids and referees are doing the best they can, that our sportsmanship pledge explained why he/she needs to be respectful and that the behavior can embarrass your club and place it in jeopardy with the league.
- 2) If it's someone from the opposing team, their team SAGE rep, if present, should try in a friendly way to deal with it. If their rep or another parent from their team does not calmly try to deal with it, you can use the "Relax..." line or another if you are comfortable doing so. If not, NOT talking further to the offender is generally best to avoid an argument. If necessary, remind your team's parents not to respond. If the other parents on the offender's team do not laugh, talk in the same way, or otherwise encourage the person, that can help quiet down some of the inappropriate conduct.

To repeat, in any of these situations, if your attempt in a calm and positive tone does not bring a positive response immediately, do not proceed and get into an argument.

Try to make a written or mental note of what is being said. Inform your coach in writing who should forward it to your club's league contact, who will pursue it with officials of the other club or through league channels. Be careful not to exaggerate or overgeneralize. Send a copy of your note to Mike. Sometimes a league official will go to a future game. This communication is kept anonymous. We do not view this as tattletaling, but rather an effort to set a better example for kids and help their self-esteem by eliminating disrespect for everyone and pressure.

Too often in dealing with these situations, we get conflicting stories about what happened. Nonetheless, once informed that something occurred, the clubs, with the support of the league, usually take steps to prevent a recurrence without the league having to take further action..

- 3) Try to discourage folks from being negative by setting the example yourselves with positive comments, like "Good try," "Nice pass," "Great effort," "You'll get it next time," "Don't worry about it," etc. Praise should be directed to opposing players as well as your own.

Let's hope more folks than ever can relax, have fun, and RESPECT everyone

Thank you again!

