

Note: We do not implement all of these points each season.



A SPORTSMANSHIP PROGRAM
of the
MID-NEW JERSEY
YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

THE MISSION

To remind us that the game is for the kids, that respect for others is a lesson we can help teach, and that setting a good example is more important than winning.

THE SAGE 7-POINT PROGRAM

1. Parents, coaches, and players sign a Sportsmanship Pledge form spelling out appropriate conduct and the reasons why good sportsmanship is so important.
2. Coaches attend mandatory preseason meetings that are used in part to reinforce SAGE. Referees attend recertification meetings where SAGE is included in the discussion.
3. Preseason team meetings are held to show parents our *Kids Come First* video, in which players, psychologists, coaches and others explain how to make youth sports a positive experience which helps kids' self-esteem and promotes respect by and for everyone.
4. Parent representatives are chosen from each team (team SAGE representatives) who become visual reminders of the program at matches. They attend a league seminar on sportsmanship and then are given colorful SAGE t-shirts and buttons. We ask that they wear a t-shirt weather permitting or a button to games.

The team SAGE representatives are not enforcers of the program. There should be no confrontations. We are encouraging all adults who hear negative comments to NOT react quickly and/or emotionally. After a pause, no reaction or a pleasant "Relax and enjoy the game" is often best. We thank all parents and coaches who are helping us help the kids by reporting disrespectful behavior to their clubs for followup by the clubs and/or the league.

Clubs take whatever action on poor sportsmanship they believe is necessary and in compliance with league rules. The consequences of inappropriate behavior by spectators, players or coaches may include a conversation with those involved and/or suggesting or mandating that they attend a sportsmanship seminar. They also may include, but are not limited to, suspension from attending matches or the last thing any of us wants, mandating that a child will not be permitted to play. The league deals with (but clubs can also act) coach and player discipline and poor spectator behavior noted by referees and also holds SAGE seminars for parents and coaches when conduct is inappropriate.

5. Brochures with reminders about the do's and don'ts of good sportsmanship (currently provided by the league) are distributed periodically to spectators at matches. In addition, signs provided by the league are used as reminders at the fields.
6. Twice per season at a team's home games, just before matches begin, brief one or two-minute meetings are held at the fields. They are conducted by one or more people designated by the home club to remind everyone about sportsmanship. A page of the brochure may be used.
7. To prevent discouragement and teach good sportsmanship, we ask coaches who get a four-goal lead in a match to take steps to keep the final score within a six-goal margin. Losing by a significant margin can help teach good lessons but we believe a six-goal differential is enough. Ways to hold down the score are on our League Report Page. How to hold down the score must be taught at practice, not during a game.

www.mnjysa.org click on SAGE

www.mnjysa.org/club click on League Report Page