Responsibilities of CJSA Coach and Spectators

CJSA has seen a number of situations this past season in which coaches and spectators have acted irresponsibly during games by openly showing disrespect towards out game officials. This, unfortunately, has mirrored a national trend. In response to these situations, the US Soccer Federation has provided referees with a very clear guideline to handle the issue, a three step process entitled ‘Ask, Tell, Dismiss’.

Many of these incidents involve interaction with our youth referees. As a result, we continue to have a high turnover of youth referees in our state. A common factor cited is that referees do not feel that the activity is worth the ‘grief’ to which they are subjected.

In order to try to curb the number of these occurrences, the Central/North Central Travel League is publishing a set of guidelines for our coaches, reminding them of their role in the league and their expected responsibility and conduct during matches. In addition to the guidelines attached, it is important to remember the following:

- **Referees play a critical role**: Referees are responsible for the control of the game, the safety of the players, and the enforcement of the rules. All referees have attended training and are certified. As such, they deserve respect, support and consideration.

- **Youth referees are often teenagers**: While all of our referees are trained and certified, many are teenagers who are just starting to gain experience. They are learning their role in the game, as our players are also doing. Mistakes will be made on both sides, but that is a natural part of the learning experience. One of the most difficult tasks for our new referees to master is control over a situation, especially one where adults are present.

  Imagine your son or daughter being charged with the responsibility of the soccer match. How would the coaches’ and spectator’s actions affect them? What would you do to improve the situation?

### Coach’s Responsibilities

- **Coaches must set an adult example**.

  Coaches have a difficult but clear task: remain poised, in control, noncritical and supportive. When dealing with youth officials, they must remember that they are the adult present and that the referee, while technically in charge, is not an adult. The referee is doing the best he or she can and should not be treated in a hostile or critical manner or tone.

- **Coaches are responsible for their spectators’ conduct**

  In addition to controlling his or her own behavior during a game, the coach must also control his or her sideline, including his players and any spectators on his or her side of the field. The coach should instruct everyone to voice only positive encouragement. Negative comments regarding opposing players or the referee are not acceptable. If the referee has problems with anyone on
the sideline, the coach will be approached to address the issue with their spectators. Do not allow spectators to go onto the field, even to attend to their own child. That is your job. Enter only when you have received permission from the referee.

**Talking to the referee during a game.**

Coaches must not show dissent by word or action during or after the match. If you wish to address the referee during the game, do so at half time or at the end of the match. Be respectful and courteous. Do not stand on the field during play. Never use foul language. Ask permission to enter the field and talk privately. Often it is good to include the other coach in the meeting. Be polite and non-threatening. These measures should help preserve a positive coach-referee relationship. After the game, if you think the referee was biased, not correct on rules, or in over his or her head, contact your Club referee assignor and explain your concerns. It is their responsibility to review the concerns and, if necessary, forward them to the referee assignor or match official. It is not necessary to get the name of the match official.

In short, your role and the influence you have on your players and your sideline cannot be exaggerated. Everyone takes their cue from the coach on how to behave and what attitude to express. Parents will pick up on a coach’s disrespect by questioning, complaining and protesting calls. Players will support their coach’s disrespectful attitude by performing blatant fouls, verbal dissent or by not shaking hands with the referee after the game. The entire team and sideline attitude stems from the attitude of the coach.

**Spectators’ Responsibilities**

*Spectators are NEVER allowed to address the referee.*

Do not publicly question the capability or honesty of the referees. Arguing with referees or officials will not be tolerated for any reason. The referee is acting in an official capacity. Never criticize, heckle, harass, jeer or shout at a referee, player or coach. Any questions regarding officials or match conduct should be addressed to your team’s coach.

*Spectators are not allowed to enter the field of play or the technical area (team seating).*

Referees have official control of the game. When necessary, they will call the team coaches on the field to deal with situations such as injuries. Spectators are not allowed to enter the field of play or the technical areas (team areas) without the specific permission of the referee.