

# The Sportsmanship Pledge

Kindly sign this pledge after you have seen our video, *Kids Come First* or another video. This Pledge summarizes important elements of the youth sports experience and sets out your commitment to Sportsmanship and Fair Play. Signing it is a condition of your participation in the Mid-New Jersey Youth Soccer Association.



## Important Information about Youth and Sports

Kids participate in sports primarily because it's fun. Adults need to keep it fun. Some adults get too emotional about youth sports because they are too concerned about how their kids are doing, have the mistaken belief that winning is very important, or have a desire for glory through their kids' success. That last one is part of the concept of living through your kids.

Kids need to know that if they're trying their best, they are winners. Parents need to remember that their kids will not be great at everything. Recognizing that, parents can help most by relaxing and enjoying these fleeting years.

Placing too much pressure on kids to perform well creates stress that can detract from their fun and their performance and can affect their self-esteem. Instructions shouted to players are distracting, usually too late, and sometimes inaccurate or in conflict with what the coach is teaching.

## My Pledge to Set A Good Example

Whether I am a player or an adult, I will not be loud or negative towards players, referees, coaches or spectators. As an adult, I should know that failing to show respect for people who are doing the best they can sets a bad example for our children and can result in expulsion from the venue and additional consequences. If someone else makes an inappropriate comment, I will not make a negative response that could lead to a confrontation. As a player, I should control my negative emotions to avoid embarrassing myself and my team, risking ejection, and hurting my team's chances of winning. And I should realize that my behavior influences younger players.

Coaches should remember that encouragement and praise for every child, not just the best athletes, are critically important to their self-esteem and their ability to achieve the most they can.

I recognize that *striving* to win, rather than winning itself, is what is important in life. Striving to win means doing the best you can. Winning too much means only that your competition is weaker.

I recognize that players must get adequate playing time to improve and gain the confidence that helps them do the best they can. Participation is what makes it fun. I acknowledge that this is more important than winning games. If coaches feel that their team lost simply because a player of lesser ability received appropriate playing time, they did the right thing.

I acknowledge that making mistakes and losing are part of life. We all suffer setbacks. I pledge that I will be tolerant of the mistakes of players, coaches, referees, and others. I recognize that mistakes are opportunities for learning.

I recognize that within the parameters of competition, sportsmanship and fair play are paramount. I pledge that I will commit to promoting an atmosphere of healthy competition to ensure fun for all participants.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Circle one: Player, Parent, Coach, Other) (Circle one: Player, Parent, Coach, Other)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Circle one: Player, Parent, Coach, Other) (Circle one: Player, Parent, Coach, Other)

[Note: If a parent is also a coach, that parent should sign as a coach.]

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