

FCV United
Parent and Spectator Sideline Behavior

Introduction

FCV United sponsors youth soccer with the goal of providing the opportunity and training for the youth of Virginia, to learn the game of soccer through the development of individual skill, fitness, teamwork, and fair play. The emphasis of FCV UNITED is to create a fun and safe environment within which players; parents and coaches may enjoy the game of soccer.

To better achieve that mission, we provide the following policy for sideline behavior for all FCV UNITED parents and spectators. This policy is not meant to curb enthusiasm for the game, but to channel parental enthusiasm in a way that is supportive for the players and coaches.

The Basics

1. Be a fan, not a coach. In other words, encourage without instructing. Much as parents should not interfere with a teacher in his or her classroom, don't interfere with the lessons that a coach is teaching your children during games. Often a coach has given instruction or is providing instruction to players and they must learn to make their own decisions on the field, no matter what those decisions look like to those watching. Parents shouting instructions to their children may directly contradict the coach, leaving the child confused or distracted.

Examples of acceptable encouragement

"Go FCV," "Keep up the good work," or "Keep hustling, FCV!"

Examples of inappropriate instruction and/or comments

- Saying "Shoot," "Boot it," "Quickly," "Get wide," or "Go get the ball;"
- Directing negative comments at your own child or any other player; or
- Using offensive or foul language.

2. Keep your opinions about refereeing to yourself and never under any circumstances interact with a referee. Referees are symbols of fair play, integrity and sportsmanship. Unfortunately there is a real shortage of qualified, experienced referees in Virginia, due in no small part to the inappropriate behavior demonstrated by parents. Please remember the relative youth and inexperience of some of our referees.

No comment to, gesture to or about or interaction with referees by parents is ever appropriate and therefore will not be allowed. If you feel criticism or commentary about a particular referee is necessary, it should be done in writing and sent to a team manager or coach, not verbally.

3. Engage other teams' parents and representatives only in positive ways. Opponents are not enemies. Take care to show good hospitality at home and to represent FCV UNITED in a positive way when visiting other clubs. Never allow yourself to be drawn into a verbal disagreement with opposing parents or coaches. Overly competitive, aggressive and inciting behavior from the sideline – including behavior directed at the opposing team or its fans– is never allowed.

4. Stay on the sidelines. The participants in games and practices are players and their coaches (and referees in games). Spectators are not participants and should always remain well back from the sidelines and within the spectator area during games. Never enter the field of play during the game without specific invitation from the referee and do not go to the team side of the field during the game (including halftime).

Note: During training sessions, parents should not be involved in any way. Therefore, they should remain at the perimeter of the fields – including after practice - unless asked on to the field by their child's coach or another club official.

Consequences of Violations

FCV UNITED parents and guardians are required to adhere to this Policy. Violations of the Policy will be brought before the FCV UNITED Technical Director and Board of Directors for review and possible sanction.

In the event that a parent or guardian violates the Policy at a game or training session, the Coach, Team Manager, field marshal or other club official may:

- Direct the offending parent to leave the field; and
- Refer the matter to the FCV UNITED Technical Director and Board of Directors for review and possible further sanction. All referred matters will be investigated and a determination shall be made as to what, if any, sanctions shall apply. Sanctions may include, but are not necessarily limited to a warning, suspension, probation, and/or dismissal from the Club. In all cases, the decisions of the FCV UNITED Board are final. If suspension or probation is implemented, those sanctioned will not be considered members of the club during the period of suspension or probation.

Final Thoughts

Be positive and supportive. Support your child by giving encouragement and showing interest in his or her team. Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game.

Overall, set a good example. Children learn more by example than by criticism. Work to be a positive role model, and reinforce positive behavior in others. Applaud good plays by others on your child's team as well as good plays by the opposing team. Do not criticize any child's performance from the sidelines. Accept the outcome of each game. Teach your child to be gracious in victory and to turn defeat into victory by learning and working toward improvement.

Parents play a special role in the development of their daughters and sons and of their teammates. Your encouragement and good example will do more to ensure good sportsmanship and self-discipline than any other influence.