

Bedford Youth Soccer

Travel Program Policy Guide

Revision 3

Revised August 2011

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the major governance and operational policies and practices of the Bedford Youth Soccer (BYS or Bedford Soccer) program. This document is intended to:

- Communicate to children, parents and coaches how the program works.
 - Describe key processes so that the processes are carried out effectively and consistently.
 - Minimize misunderstanding about program goals and operations.
 - Maximize the amount of time people devote to the game itself rather than to the administration of the game.
 - Contribute to player development and to the fun children have playing the game.
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1. Program Mission And Goals

Bedford Soccer's mission is to serve the children and achieve these goals:

1. All children can play. We provide opportunities for children of all skill levels to learn and play the game.
2. Fun, learning, enjoyment. Having fun, learning and enjoying the game are always more important than winning.
3. The game is the best teacher. Effective practice combines age-appropriate skill development with time spent playing the game.
4. Sportsmanship and teamwork. Learning and demonstrating excellent sportsmanship and teamwork are key parts of learning soccer. (See Appendix A: Demonstrating Sportsmanship).
5. Positive coaching. Coaching must always be positive, supporting children's enjoyment of the game, strengthening children's self esteem and creating a positive environment.
6. Positive spectatorship. Parents and spectators play a crucial role in providing a positive experience for the children. Positive spectators show respect for and appreciation of the game, the coaches, and the players on all teams.

2. Organizational Structure Of The Program

1. Overview

The organization of Bedford's soccer program differs from that of many towns in that it involves a collaboration of the town's Recreation Department and the Soccer Committee, a volunteer group. This collaboration has the potential to provide an especially strong program. The town's Recreation philosophy is that Recreation programs are open to all Bedford residents on an equal opportunity basis. Bedford travel soccer teams participate in the Boston Area Youth Soccer (BAYS) League and the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA).

2. Roles: The Recreation Department

The Recreation Department has the overall responsibility to achieve the program mission and goals outlined in Section 1. In addition, it provides:

- Uniforms (inventory/orders/ assignment of #'s)
- Pass cards (coaches - process, players - process)
- MYSA affiliation (2X/year)
- Equipment purchasing (goals, nets, pinnies, cones, medical supplies, coaches' shirts, balls, patches, whistles, manuals, etc.)
- Coordination with DPW
- Registration of players
- Database of coaches and players
- Mailings
- Travel bags (provide equipment and supplies)
- Field schedule coordination with coaches
- Financial reporting

3. Roles: The Soccer Committee

The Soccer Committee is a sub-committee of the Recreation Commission and has the overall responsibility to achieve the program mission and goals outlined in Section 1, and is in addition, responsible for:

- Coach recruitment, training, assignments, evaluation, selection and recognition
- Determining equipment needs (inventory & requirements)
- Determining field needs
- Determining practice schedule
- Determining teams and player evaluation methods
- BAYS meeting attendance
- Organizing participation in Bedford Day Parade
- Weekend Field Inspection and coordination
- Referee coordination
- Addressing issues involving players, coaches and parents

4. Roles: The Bedford DPW

The Bedford Department of Public Works is responsible for:

- Lining fields
- Moving/securing goals
- Determining which fields are available for use
- Maintaining fields

3. Registration

1. Deadlines

Ensuring that the maximum numbers of players can be placed on teams requires that parents are clear about when their children must be registered in the soccer program. This enables the Recreation Department and Soccer Committee to have an accurate list of registered players and enough time to determine how many teams can be formed. It is imperative that all players be signed up before the deadline in order to allow the Soccer Committee to do the best job possible in forming teams for the coming season.

NOTE: Registering for travel soccer is a serious commitment. Players who register and withdraw affect the team selection and placement of many other children in the program. No refunds are made for withdrawals from the program without documentation of reasonable cause.

The Bedford Soccer program's registration deadline is determined by the travel league in which the town plays, currently BAYS. Dates are published in the Bedford Recreation Department brochure and in Soccer Committee communications.

2. Number of Teams Formed

The goal of the program is to field as many teams as possible considering the total number of players who have signed up by the registration deadline. Recreation department programs are "first come, first serve" and open to participants of all abilities. Bedford Soccer submits to the BAYS league the number of teams we will field in each age group approximately six weeks after our registration deadline. The six-week lead-time is necessary to collect player evaluations from coaches, conduct player field evaluations, meet with coaches to organize teams by ability, and complete the paperwork.

3. Roster Size

Roster size is determined by the number of players who register on time, and by the competition level of the team. "6v6" teams have rosters of from 9 to 11. "8v8" teams have rosters from 11 to 13 players. "11v11" teams have rosters of from 15 to 18 players. Rosters should be as close to equal as possible within an age group to equalize playing time. Total numbers of registrants also determine how many players will be on a roster. For example, if 30 boys sign up for U10 "6v6" teams, Bedford will field three teams (assuming an average roster size of 10), rather than fielding two teams (with a large roster size of 11), but which would leave 8 boys on the wait list. The intent is always to get the most children possible playing. The roster sizes discussed above are guidelines and roster sizes may vary based on the team's level of ability and the number of players registered in an age group.

4. Wait-listed, Even When Signed Up On Time

Every effort is made to accommodate all registrations, but due to numbers players may still be wait listed even if they sign up on time. Players will be placed on teams on a first come, first served basis. This is the same policy that is used for all Recreation programs. Occasionally, due to an insufficient number of registered players, some players may be left off a roster.

Moving Off The Wait List

Wait-listed players will be placed on a team only if a player on the team drops off before the season begins. Openings are filled in the order they occur, starting at the top of the wait list. Once rosters have been released, an effort is made to keep all team rosters intact.

5. Late List

Players who register after the deadline will be placed on a "Late List", with no guarantee of being put on a team. Players who move to town after the registration deadline and before the soccer season starts will go to the top of the late list.

6. "Beat the Bushes" Period

In certain cases the Soccer Committee maintains a "beat the bushes" period for coaches and parents of wait-listed players to find additional players for the "last" team.

7. "Playing Up" Policy

"Playing Up" occurs when a child plays on a team in an age group older than the age group he or she would normally be in as determined by birth-date. Players born in August, who miss the MYSA July 31 travel cut-off, may play with children in their grade on a Bedford team, and are not considered to be playing up.

Following the Soccer program's mission to focus on the enjoyment of the game and MYSA policy, playing up is discouraged in all but the most extreme circumstances.

1. Approval of a Request to Play Up

The decision about whether a child may play up is made by the Soccer Committee, only after assessing the numbers and abilities of players registered in the affected age groups. The goal is to avoid hurting an entire age group simply to benefit one or two individuals (e.g. playing one child up may bring a team's rating down from Division One to Division Two). The goal is to achieve the "most good for the group," not for the individual. For example, a U12 player would not be placed on a U14 team with the result of leaving other U14 players on a wait list. Under-aged players will have last priority in getting on a team in an older age group.

8. Exceptional Players

Players with exceptional ability who feel that Bedford Soccer cannot satisfy their interests may wish to pursue other opportunities including Club Teams, elite teams, the Olympic Development Program, and others. Information about such programs is available from MYSA.

4. Forming Teams

1. Objectives

Bedford Soccer's procedures for forming teams are intended to reflect the program's goals of providing equal opportunities for all children to learn, appreciate and enjoy the game, and to comply with BAYS and MYSA league rules. Each age group has further specific team formation objectives relevant to that age group. The objectives for each age group are listed below in order of descending priority they are given when forming teams.

These policies are guidelines that we attempt to follow in all situations. However, it is impossible to adequately cover all variations of team formation issues and registration numbers may limit/enhance the options available. As a result, the soccer committee reserves the right to discount the guidelines if another solution provides a better situation for a large number of players.

1. U9/U10 age groups

- Maximize the number of players in each age group who are placed on teams.
- Form teams with players from a single age group (U9 separate from U10)
- Assure that all teams have a qualified and enthusiastic coach
- Evenly distribute the players of similar abilities across all the teams so that the teams are all of similar competitive levels (balanced).
- Form teams so that they can be placed in a section within BAYS where they can be competitive.
- Reform the teams for each season so that players have the chance to play with a wide variety of players and coaches.

2. U11/U12 age groups

- Maximize the number of players in each age group who are placed on teams.
- Form teams so that they can be placed in a section within BAYS where they can be competitive
- Place U11 and U12 players on teams with players of similar abilities.

3. U14 age groups

- Maximize the number of players in each age group who are placed on teams.
- Form teams so that they can be placed in a section within BAYS where they can be competitive
- Place players on teams with players of similar abilities.

Occasionally a small number of players from U-9/U-10 age groups may be asked to voluntarily move up to a higher age group. This may be done in cases where registration numbers in an age group would result in players not being placed on a team. Players would only be asked to move up one age group. For example, if there are 25 players registered for U10 two teams of 11 can be formed with three volunteers sought to move up to U11. This would not be done if registration numbers in the U12/11 age group with the three additional players would not result in there being any U11 teams.

4. The Age Group Coordinator

Each season, the Soccer Committee appoints an Age Group Coordinator (AGC) for each age group and gender in which teams will be formed. AGCs facilitate forming teams and assigning coaches for their specified age group. AGCs need not be a member of the Soccer Committee, but must be aware and supportive of the goals of Bedford Soccer, must have experience in coaching youth. It is recommended AGCs have an "F" level coaching license or higher. The U9/U10 coordinators may have a child in the age group. U11/U12 and above may not have a child in the age group. The information collected and processed by the AGC in order to form teams will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

AGCs DO: Guide coaches through the player evaluation process, collect the paperwork, consolidate all rating information, and decide how many teams and the type of teams to field in each division of the age group. All ratings information is kept confidential by the AGC. AGCs form teams based on all the data collected.

AGCs DO NOT: Decide which team a player should be on independently, but rather make the decision based on previous season coach rankings and the field evaluation data.

5. Deciding How Many Teams To Field In An Age Group

Within forty-eight hours of the close of travel registration, the travel coordinator should consult with each AGC regarding how many teams to tentatively field in the age group. This should be done so that the Recreation Department has specific guidelines to follow when they open for business after the registration deadline has passed. The number of teams should be determined based on how many players registered and roster sizes based on current policies.

6. Evaluating Players: Coaches' Responsibilities

Coaches and Assistant Coaches provide the most heavily weighted source of information on player abilities and rankings via the standard player evaluation form. By working with their players throughout the season, coaches have the most consistent picture of individual players' strengths and weaknesses, and can judge how players compare with each other within their team. As such, coaches' rankings are the primary input into team formation, and always supersede independent field evaluation if in conflict. AGCs do not consider a coach's evaluation of their own child in the team formation process.

7. Merging Age Groups

Each fall when the older half of an age group is merged with the younger half of the next oldest age group, player ranking and placement issues tend to be most complicated. For instance, fourth-graders and fifth-graders, who previously played in U10 and U12, respectively, will now be in U12 together. Even when coaches in each age group have a shared understanding of player abilities and rankings in their own age group, figuring how to merge the two can be complex. The AGC uses the field evaluation ratings to try to figure out how to appropriately merge the age group and also for any players who didn't play in the previous season.

8. Independent Field Evaluation

Field evaluations, where independent evaluators evaluate players during on-field play, are generally conducted in June, usually on the Sunday of the last weekend of the Travel Soccer season. Incoming U10 and U9 players do not participate in field evaluations. The purpose of the field evaluation is to see how players of merged age groups compare. Ratings for all the players in the age group are the output of the field evaluation. Evaluations are run in such a way that final team rosters are kept confidential and the children's self-esteem is protected. AGCs will assume a 5% margin of error on all field evaluations.

As a result, it is highly recommended that all players attend the field evaluation.

9. If a Player has no Field Evaluation

If a player moves to town after field evaluations have been held and has a chance to be placed on a fall team because of an opening, the player will be placed on a team according to the following criteria: consider the division level in which the player competed at their previous residence in conjunction with the division in which the opening occurs. If an opening occurs on the top-ranked team, most likely existing players will be ratcheted up to fill the opening and the new player should be placed on a team that most closely matches their prior division. If an opening occurs on a bottom team, the new player will be placed in that opening, without any ratcheting down of other players.

If a player does not attend field evaluations and wishes to play on a team in the fall, coach opinions will be used exclusively to place the player on an appropriate team. A player who missed the field evaluation and wishes to play in the spring may request to attend a practice with a team in their age group in order to be informally evaluated so coaches have more current information about the player's abilities. The coaches' observations of the player's abilities will be considered when making decisions about future rosters.

10. Resolving "gray area" placements

Many times, despite all the data collected, it is unclear how particular players should be placed. Different coaches' evaluations could disagree, data could be interpreted multiple ways, or there may be no reliable way to compare two players "head to head." In such a "gray area" scenario the AGC will consult with coaches familiar with the players in question and make the best judgment she or he can. Coaches will not be consulted about their own children.

11. Spring Rosters

For the ranked age groups, the teams will be kept together as much as possible from the fall to spring season. Balanced teams will be completely reformed in the spring.

12. Coach Responsibilities in Team Formation

Coaches should fill out the player evaluation forms thoroughly and thoughtfully and **MUST** submit the forms promptly.

13. Soccer Committee Responsibility

Bedford Soccer Committee has the discretion to make final decisions on all player placements.

5. Issue Resolution

1. Goals

Policies for resolving conflicts have three goals:

- Provide a fair and effective forum for addressing and resolving conflicts
- Remove the anxiety of presenting a conflict to a nine-member committee
- Enable the Soccer Committee to focus its efforts on policy rather than on specific conflicts

Most grievances appear to be related to two areas

- Dissatisfaction with the team a player is placed on
- Dissatisfaction with a coach

2. Grievance Officer

The Grievance Officer (GO) is appointed by the Soccer Committee to investigate grievances submitted to the Recreation Department. This person must be familiar with the team formation and coach selection policies of the travel program. If the Grievance Officer receives a grievance that would present a conflict of interest, the Soccer Committee Chair will appoint an alternate Grievance Officer to act upon the grievance.

3. Grievance Steps

1. Notify the Recreation Department

When someone has a grievance, they first notify the Recreation Department. The Recreation Department will attempt to explain the relevant sections of the policy as it pertains to the grievance. In many instances no further action will be needed by the Soccer Committee.

2. File a Grievance with the Grievance Officer

If the Recreation Department's explanation does not resolve the issue in a manner satisfactory to the grievant, then the grievant must submit a written request to the Recreation Department. The Recreation Department will forward the request to the Grievance Officer who will contact the grievant upon receipt. To accelerate the problem-solving process, the request should describe what the concerns are and identify possible resolutions. The GO will contact the appropriate parties to gather information that will be used to resolve the issue.

For example, if the grievance involves a player placement complaint, then the GO may converse with the AGC and/or coaches to better understand the placement decision. If the complaint is about a coach, the grievance representative may need to talk to other parties to get a better understanding of the situation. The point should be to resolve the dispute and focus on fun for the players.

Once the GO determines a solution the aggrieved party will be contacted and the issue resolution will be discussed. If the Grievance Officer's decision is disputed, the aggrieved party may notify the recreation department that they would like to appeal to the Soccer Committee.

3. Player Placement Grievances

The player placement procedures described in this document are designed to make a difficult process as fair as possible. In order for a placement grievance to be successful, a specific policy must have been violated. A disagreement with a player's placement by itself is not sufficient for a grievance to be successful. If a specific policy has not been violated, the grievance will not be successful and the player's team assignment will not be changed.

Player placement grievances must be submitted in writing and received by the Recreation Department at least four weeks prior to the beginning of the travel season. This is to enable a player's team placement to be changed if appropriate prior to the season starting.

6. Player Development

Bedford Soccer's approach to player development reflects its overall program goals. Player development is based first on providing a positive, enjoyable experience for the children. Practices are used to teach and reinforce soccer skills. Skilled players can perform technically and tactically under pressure, so that both technical skills (ball control) and tactics (reacting appropriately in a game situation) are emphasized. Equally important are the "life lessons" of playing on a team: responsibility, winning and losing with dignity, and showing respect for teammates, coaches, fans, referees, and opponents.

"Coach Development" parallels these "Player Development" requirements. Coaches are encouraged to learn more advanced soccer skills and tactics by reading books and viewing videotapes, in addition to taking the MYSA license courses. Bedford Soccer periodically purchases new soccer books and videotapes and donates them to the Bedford Public Library for coaches to borrow.

1. The Game is the Best Teacher

Key to player development is the tenet that "the game is the best teacher." In other words, playing the game in some form usually provides an enjoyable and effective form of learning. Practices consisting of individual and small group activities combined with game playing develop the player most effectively.

2. Age-Appropriate Development

While it is important to challenge and stimulate children, sometimes well-meaning parents and coaches attempt to teach children skills beyond what they can learn and internalize. This kind of effort frustrates the children as well as the coaches and parents. Thus it is important for all coaches and parents to familiarize themselves with the different levels of specific skills and strategies that children can be expected to learn at different ages. (See Appendix B: Player Development Guidelines). These levels and skills are spelled out effectively and in detail in other documents. Bedford Soccer uses as its guide the MYSA document "Player Development in Youth Soccer: Through the Years" which urges coaches to remember that every child is unique and that patience is vital.

3. Exceptional Players

Occasionally a coach will have a player who is markedly better than other players in his or her age group. The Bedford Soccer program has the following approach for developing such players:

- The coach should set a higher level of expectation for the player (more passes, more use of weak foot, additional moves).
- The coach should identify exceptional players to the AGC. The AGC should communicate to the parents of the player what opportunities exist for exceptional players. These may include the Olympic Development Program, and moving to a club team in a Select/Premier league outside of the Bedford Soccer program. Parents wanting to familiarize themselves with alternatives for exceptional players can read the Baystater newspaper produced by MYSA, which regularly publishes articles on such programs.

7. Referee Program

Referees are an extremely important part of the soccer program. As demand for referees is very high, the program encourages all individuals, particularly youth players, interested in refereeing to

consider taking the referee training course. Details about how to become a referee are available from the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSAs). Their web site, mayouthsoccer.org, has information for people interested in becoming a referee. The Bedford Soccer program will notify youth players, particularly U14 and older players, of opportunities to take the referee entry-level course. If enough interest is demonstrated, Bedford will host a referee course in town.

8. Positive Coaching

1. Coaching Overview

Coaches play a crucial role in determining the quality of the experience the children have in learning soccer. Coaches also are significant figures in the eyes of many children, who look to them as role models and mentors as well as sources of information about soccer. It is important for parents to recognize that coaches are not infallible. At the same time, it is important for coaches to acknowledge the responsibility they have not only for teaching soccer but also for building a positive environment, modeling good sportsmanship and contributing in a positive way to the children's development.

2. Procedure for Applying

Parents need to indicate their willingness to coach by filling in the appropriate blank on the Recreation Department registration form when their child registers for soccer. This should be done before the registration deadline expires so AGCs know how many coaches are available and so coaches can be selected fairly.

3. Confirming Willingness to Coach

All parents who have volunteered to coach will receive an acknowledgement from the Travel Coordinator via mail within one month of the registration deadline. The confirmation does not mean that the volunteer is guaranteed a coaching slot, but that when teams are formed, they will be considered, according to the criteria below. The acknowledgment letter should include details such as the planned timeframe, dates for forming teams and notifying coaches.

4. Criteria And Process For Selecting Head Coaches and Assistants

When AGCs compile data to form teams they should ensure that they have the names of all parents who have volunteered to coach in their age group. They should also have the following information about each potential coach: Coaching License achieved, coaching experience, preference to be an assistant or head coach and (if available) parent evaluations of the coach provided in previous coaching assignments.

For U9 and U10 teams, the head coaches are selected first, and then the teams are formed. For U11/U12 and U14, after teams have been formed around players' abilities, the AGC should see which players on each team have parents on the "will volunteer to coach" list. If more than one player's parent wishes to be head coach, then the head coach should be chosen based on a number of factors including coaching license level, coaching experience, and soccer knowledge. Evaluations of the coach from the previous year may also be used. Availability should be considered as well, along with conflicts with other sports. For example, coaches in the spring trying to coach both soccer and baseball: given a choice between two equally qualified coaches, one who is available to coach just soccer and the other balancing two sports, preference should be given to the former.

On teams where multiple coaches are interested in Head Coaching, coaches may be asked to take a season off or serve as an Assistant Coach to give someone else a chance to be the Head Coach. Bedford Soccer wishes to encourage parents to coach, and strives to develop a wide pool of potential coaches rather than depending on a small group of repeat Head Coaches. Coaches learn a lot from each other: spending a season as an Assistant Coach can allow a coach to develop even stronger skills.

Assistant Coaches should be selected in this order: first, if other player parents have volunteered, they should be placed as assistant coaches, with preference going to coaches with the highest license level first and experience second. If no other parent has volunteered, the head coach may recruit a parent of one of the players to become assistant coach. All teams should have at least one assistant coach for reasons of safety, and to ensure better practices and communication.

NOTE: If no parent volunteers to assist, then parents must work out a rotating schedule to assist, so that one of the parents is always present with the head coach at practices.

If a team is formed that has players with no parents who have volunteered to coach, the parents should be contacted by the Travel Coordinator and advised that there will be no team unless someone volunteers to coach.

How Many Teams May An Individual Coach?

Given the amount of time necessary to coach a team, individuals should not plan on coaching more than one team. If named as a Head Coach of one team, an individual may act as an Assistant Coach on a second team, only if there are insufficient volunteers to be assistant coaches.

BYS desires to strike a balance that enables experienced coaches to continue to develop their coaching skills, but also allows interested parents with less soccer experience the opportunity to enjoy the challenges and rewards of coaching youth soccer.

5. Coach Training

The BYS program encourages all coaches to continuously improve their coaching skills by participating in formal training programs and earning licenses. The program pays all program fees for coaches who take advantage of the training opportunities.

Within the second year of involvement in the program, a coach must begin the process of certification. The expectation is that a G license or equivalent is the minimum for intramural soccer and an F or equivalent license for travel Under-10, and an E or equivalent license for travel Under-12.

New coaches have several options available to them to become more knowledgeable about soccer. These options include MYSA Coach License Courses, Bedford Soccer Program Documents, Reference Materials in the Library, Coach Mentors, and Coach Forums.

6. MYSA Courses

MYSA Coach License Course fees will be paid by the Town of Bedford Recreation Department if a Bedford coach attends. The town will pay for E and below. Level D and higher require prior approval. The courses are listed on the [MYSA web site](#). These courses start at Coach Level "G" and advance (backward) toward License Level "A."

7. Role of Head and Assistant Coaches

The Head Coach manages the team and should decide how to allocate responsibilities involved in team management. Those responsibilities may include communicating with players, planning and running practices, setting game strategies, planning line-ups, managing substitutions and player positions during a game, managing parent and player behavior on the field, and organizing other activities that promote good sportsmanship and a positive team environment. The Assistant Coach can do any or all of these activities but should look to the Head Coach for direction. Head Coaches should ensure that they use the Assistant not just for minor activities, but also try to develop their Assistant into a possible future Head Coach. This means that the Assistant Coach should plan and manage a game at least once during the season.

8. Guidelines for Coaches At All Times, In Practices And In Games

Coach behavior should be exemplary during practices and games:

- Create a positive environment.
- Develop skilled players, promote fun, good sportsmanship and good soccer. Winning is secondary.
- Be fair: ensure that playing time is equitable, rotate position assignments so players spend equal time at different positions (offense/defense).
- Promote good sportsmanship and set an example for the players
- Coaches should respect a parent's right to give feedback either about a team or about an individual player. Parents should respect the fact that all coaches are volunteers and mistakes by coaches are part of the process and it is far easier to observe than it is to make decisions during a game.

Guidelines for Coaches at Games

- Show respect for referees and opponents
- Use Positive Coaching Methods. Positive Coaching produces better results for soccer and for child development. Positive coaching means:
 - Encourage; reward effort more than results.
 - Never say anything negative! Instead of saying "No! Not like that!" Try saying "Nice try! Next time try doing..."
 - No shouting during games except for occasional encouragement.
 - Try not to instruct players on the field. If it is necessary, only instruct players not in the play or not under pressure.
 - Instruct players on the sidelines.
 - Tell parents not to instruct during games or use players' names. Ask them to only yell encouragement.
- Never publicly question a referee's call, chastise or belittle a referee.
- Inform parents of the need for appropriate and respectful behavior on the sidelines, and deal directly with any parent who fails to act accordingly. Contact a member of the Soccer Committee if you feel uncomfortable dealing with a parent directly. Coaches are ultimately responsible for parental conduct during games.
- There should be no discussions with the referee during the game. Follow any league policy on **"Zero Tolerance."**
- Referees should be thanked after each game. This is a particularly good example for players.
- Coaches and teams should not be on the same side as spectators.
- Players should rotate positions as far as is reasonable. Many players are not equally comfortable in different positions particularly as they get

older. This should be taken into account along with the needs of the team on a particular day.

Guidelines for Coaches During Practices

- Coaches should have a written plan
- Use methods of "efficient" practice maximizing number of times each child touches ball during the practice
- Practices should be fun: don't rely on the same drills each practice - vary the routine to keep players engaged.
- Two coaches at every practice - this is an absolute necessity for safety reasons. If no assistant coach is available, a player's parent should remain for the practice.
- There should be at least one woman assigned to each girls' team, if available.
- "The game is the best teacher." Instead of using abstract drills, use small-sided games whenever possible to teach techniques.
- Most drills should involve the ball; minimal laps or sprints without a ball.
- All drill should involve the ball; no laps or sprints unless also dribbling or passing
- There should be less than 5 minutes out of each 60 minutes spent on discussion or talking.
- There should be a 2-minute break every 20 minutes for water.
- Practices should not exceed 90 minutes.

9. MYSA Code Of Conduct

It is expected that coaches will follow the Coaches Code of Conduct, as set forth by the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, and that Coaches will take the lead in following the BAYS league "Zero Tolerance" policy. The Code of Conduct and a summary of the key points of the Zero Tolerance policy are below. Coaches are responsible for managing their games, which includes managing the behavior not only of their players, but also of their players' parents. Coaches should set expectations for behavior at the beginning of every season. By providing positive feedback regularly to parents throughout the season, coaches can limit negative activity along the sidelines. The Bedford Soccer Committee will regularly remind parents of their responsibilities as spectators in mailings to players' parents.

Coaches Code of Conduct

The Board of Directors of Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, Incorporated (MYSA) and the leaders of the affiliated Leagues are concerned about the conduct of all coaches and referees during games at all levels, from recreational to premier to ODP.

We want to ensure that games are fair, positive and enjoyable experiences for all of the children and adults involved. A soccer game should be friendly and unifying - a spirited social and athletic occasion for players, coaches, referees and spectators.

To clarify expectations of coach conduct, we jointly expect all coaches to conform to this code of conduct.

Before, during and after the game, be an example of dignity, patience and positive spirit.

Before a game, introduce yourself to the opposing coach and to the referee.

During the game, you are responsible for the sportsmanship of your players. If one of your players is disrespectful, irresponsible or overly aggressive, take the player out of the game at least long enough for him/her to calm down.

During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of the parents of your players. It is imperative to explain acceptable player and parent behavior in a preseason meeting.

Encourage them to applaud and cheer for good plays by either team. Discourage them and you may need to be forceful and direct from yelling at players and the referee.

During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of spectators rooting for your team.

During the game, do not address the referee at all. If you have a small issue, discuss it with the referee calmly and patiently after the game.

If you have a major complaint, or if you think the referee was unfair, biased, unfit or incompetent, report your opinion to your League. Your reactions will be taken seriously if they are presented objectively and formally.

After the game, thank the referee and ask your players to do the same.

We stress two points:

Referees - especially young and inexperienced ones - are like your players and yourself, in that they need time to develop. You can play an important role in helping them to improve by letting them concentrate on the game. You can help by encouraging them, by accepting their inevitable, occasional mistakes and by offering constructive post-game comments. On the other hand, you could discourage and demoralize the referees by criticizing their decisions, by verbally abusing them and inciting - or even accepting - your own players' overly aggressive behavior.

Your example is powerful, for better or worse. If you insist on fair play, if you concentrate on your players' enjoyment of the game and their overall, long term development, and if you support the referee, your players and their parents will notice. If you encourage (or allow) your players to play outside the rules, if you're overly concerned about results, and if you criticize the referee harshly, your players and their parents will also notice.

Think about what you're doing during a game! Uphold the Spirit of the Game! If you follow the expectations described above, the spirit of the game will be alive and well in Massachusetts and will grow, along with the enjoyment of all.

Coaches who don't follow the expectations described above will be disciplined or removed.

10. BAYS Zero Tolerance Policy

(BYLAW 12) Adopted by the general membership on Feb. 10, 1999

The full policy is printed in the BAYS schedule book and on the BAYS website.

The essence of the policy is clear in the first paragraph, below:

All persons responsible for a team and all the spectators shall support the referee. Failure to do so will undermine the referee's authority and has the potential of creating a hostile environment for players, the referee and all of the other participants and spectators. Consequently, BAYS has adopted the following rule: No one is to address the referee during the game!!