

Sportsmanship

“Sportsmanship expresses an aspiration or ethos that the activity will be enjoyed for its own sake, with proper consideration for fairness, ethics, and a sense of fellowship with one’s competitors. Being a good sport involves being a good winner as well as being a good loser” (Wikipedia).

We’d like to start off by thanking each of every one of you for stepping up as volunteer coaches and making PISA such an enjoyable experience for everyone involved. Your commitment and efforts are immeasurable, and an intricate part of what makes PISA the best program in the area. We could not do this without you.

“PISA strives to provide a healthy and fun environment for the children of this community by building friendships, self-confidence, and sportsmanship through soccer.”

Coaching children is an honor and a privilege that carries with it a moral responsibility to contribute to the healthy character development of young players. Sportsmanship has always been, and will continue to be the single most important part of our mission here at PISA. Players who practices good sportsmanship are more likely to carry the respect and appreciation of other people into every other aspect of life.

How do we as coaches stress the importance of good sportsmanship and ultimately pass it along to our players and their parents? Coaches who equate “trying your best” as the definition of success – and who value, expect, and demand good sportsmanship from their players – help shape the moral, ethical, and spiritual character of their players. This includes respecting team members, opponents, coaches, and officials; always stressing polite behaviors such as helping an opponent up off the ground and shaking hands before and after a match.

Let’s focus our attention on player development, and praise them as their individual skills improve. This will allow your players to see themselves as winners, regardless of the score at the end of a match. It is also very important that we applaud good play, regardless of the team, and accept bad calls made by the referee(s) gracefully. Remember, at the end of the day, this is supposed to be FUN. You and the team parents should be able to enjoy the game of soccer, while realizing all the benefits these children are gaining.

If you were to look through the PISA General League Rules you will come across a section titled **Good-Sportsmanship Rule**. The purpose of this rule is to encourage good sportsmanship and to keep one team from out-scoring their opponent to the extent it is considered unsportsmanlike. The maximum goal differential allowed for each team before a penalty is imposed is 5 goals.

For each goal scored beyond a 5 goal differential, a “Goal Point” will be subtracted from the winning team’s goal points. Here are a few coaching suggestions if you ever find yourself on the winning side in the middle of a lopsided match, where the Good-Sportsmanship Rule is at risk of being broken:

1. Move players into different positions (example: move your leading scorer into the goal and/or put your offensive players in the back and move your defenders forward)
2. Challenge your players by requiring them to shoot with their weaker foot (develops the weaker side)
3. Only allowing them to shoot when the ball comes from a cross (emphasizes team width)
4. Put players on a touch-restriction (limiting touches requires player to concentrate on their first touch and then get their head up to find passing options)
5. Require your team to connect a certain number of consecutive passes before a shot can be taken (requiring movement off the ball)
6. Playing with less players on the field

These are only a few suggestions of how you can challenge your players in the unfortunate event of a lopsided game, without running up the score.

We here at PISA appreciate everything you do, and look forward to another fantastic season.

