



Team Sideline Liason Program (TSL)
“The Voice of the Child”
 Updated March 2010

MYS supports a club-wide team sideline liaison (TSL) program to support and encourage appropriate behavior by parents, spectators and coaches.

Since implementing our club-wide TSL program and renewed coach, parent and player education, we now consistently produce some of the best young referees in the state, and an MYS player (Caity Flint) and volunteer (Maureen Dalbec) were named “Champion of Character Awards” for Fairfax County. Now, we continuously receive positive feedback regarding the professional manner in which our players, fans and coaches approach the game of soccer

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Overview

The sideline behavior in MYS is better than most clubs and leagues but we still have too many problems. As a result, MYS, in keeping with its efforts to be in the forefront of best practices in youth soccer, has instituted a new program and program training to deal with sideline issues and inappropriate behavior--the Team Sideline Liaison program.

The program includes the identification, training and registration of a TSL for each and every MYS team, Recreation and Travel, at all ages.



The TSL is "the voice of the child," as it is always the players that suffer from sideline behavior problems. We hope this training will become a model for other clubs and NCSL, WAGS and ODSL.

Travel leagues in the area have already asked all travel teams to identify a parent (not the coach or coach spouse) to be the TSL and to help deal with sideline behavior issues and be a liaison with the ref. To our knowledge no rec clubs have yet done this. Even more important, few training programs exist or are not as comprehensive as that which we plan.

We provide training (one session) by an experienced and widely respected Certified Sports Psychologist, Neal Bowes, of "SIMPLYaphilosophy" who has not only theoretical knowledge but a broad background in youth soccer. (He has also played at a high level and been a referee.)

The training provides a 4 step method of dealing with problems and includes small group work with role playing on specific situations. We also review the reporting process to bring in club officials if the problem proves too big for the TSL to handle.

The training will be held prior to each season. See the MYS calendar for dates.

We will accept guests from WAGS teams outside McLean Youth Soccer at a charge of \$15 (check made out to McLean Youth Soccer) per guest at the door and will confirm their attendance to WAGS. Guests (non MYS-members) are welcome but should register by e-mail to admin@mcleansoccer.org at least three days before the training session that they wish to attend.

Likewise, WAGS teams from MYS that have attended the WAGS TSL training may fulfill the MYS requirement to have a trained TSL by obtaining confirmation from WAGS that their TSL attended the WAGS training.

And last we want to remind everyone that MYS has [codes of conducts for coaches, players and parents.](#)

Program Objectives

The objectives of the MYS Team Sideline Liaison program are:

- To establish a coordinated, consistent, fair, and transparent approach for dealing with sideline issues
- To identify clear roles and responsibilities for TSL's
- To offer suitable training for TSL's to develop confidence to manage sideline issues
- To establish a network of trained TSL's
- To formulate a clear framework of operation for discipline / regulations related to sideline behavior
- To educate coaches and parents regarding sideline behavior

Training Sessions

Each year at least two (2) sessions are be available for teams, board members, and R & D committee members to attend.

- Each training workshop is approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes in length
- The number of participants for each sessions is managed to maximum benefit from interactive input

Role of the TSL

- Being the voice of the child



- To ensure appropriate behavior and language of parents
- Primarily an educator and mediator
- At U6-8 more emphasis on encouraging parents to learn, collecting balls, etc
- At U9 and above, liaison to referee to assist with sideline behavior
- To ensure codes of conducts are observed
- Not a police officer type

Choosing a TSL: suitable characteristics

- Sociable
- Good communicator
- Knows other parents on the team
- Regularly attends games
- Game delivery:

Game Day Responsibilities

Pre game – Identify self to referee (U9 and older), coaches, other team's TSL, and parents, identify particular issues before they arise and raise awareness – eg. young inexperienced referees – remind parents that they are young, inexperienced and will make mistakes – ask them to consider this information before making any reaction.

During game- be active (ie. you are not merely there to be a spectator), encouraging, try to identify and deal with situations before they go too far, deal with issues .

Post game – congratulate parents who were fair sports and followed the code of conduct. It is always important to reward the behavior you desire

TSL: The 4 step approach

During the training session, all participants will be instructed in a 4 step process for dealing with sideline behavior issues as well as how to deal with issues that need to be escalated to other members of the MYS team.

Common objectives

- To diffuse situations calmly and quickly
- To use tact, diplomacy and humor where possible
- To avoid confrontation and fuelling of situation
- To avoid physical or verbal abuse
- To avoid patronizing or humiliating language
- Offer advice on how to avoid similar situations in the future
- To seek support where TSL feels intimidated

Reporting procedure

- If a TSL reaches stage 4 and is unable to resolve the issue, the TSL must report the issue to a TSL manager.
- All issues must be reported within 3 days of the event.
- TSL managers are listed below
- Recreation Director – Jane Scott Jones, 703-538-2548, house@mcleansoccer.org
- Travel Director – Dean Cretsinger, [phone no] , travel@mcleansoccer.org
- Director of Referees – Paul Best [phone no.], refs@mcleansoccer.org



Upon receiving a report from a TSL, TSL managers will decide the severity of the issue. The TSL manager may choose to deal with the matter themselves using the guidance notes (e.g. coach behavior) and/or contact with others such as parents, coaches, AGC, etc.

If the TSL manager feels the issue can be resolved with the intervention of the team's coach, the TSL manager will speak with the coach and provide guidance as to how to resolve the issue (see guidance notes for coaches in appendices). t

If the TSL manager feels the issue is unlikely to be resolved with the intervention of the team's coach, the matter may be referred to the R & D committee.

Once the TSL manger has reported the issue to the R & D committee, that committees polices and procedures will prevail. As with reports of misbehavior reported by refs, other coaches or parents, R&D may send a representative to observe and possibly counsel the individual in question prior to considering sanctions. (It is envisioned that R&D should expand by about 3 members so no one gets overloaded.)

Sanctions

In accordance with MYS rules and R & D committee regulations

Scenarios:

Develop a range of scenarios for training and practice
Members of TSL group to submit example scenarios

Examples

Scenario 1

At a U12 game, a dad is pacing up and down the touchline, almost on the field, shouting instructions to his son. As you approach the parent they aggressively turn to you extending their hand and state "Don't even bother talking to me. I know who you are and what you are supposed to do, but you are not going to tell me how and when I can talk to my son, so go away." Consider how you would deal with this situation. Play out the situation and practice the response as a group. Ensure your response utilizes the 4 step approach.

Scenario 2

At a U10 game, a parent is clearly getting frustrated with the young inexperienced referee. They begin to gesticulate towards them and begin to make comments such as "C'mon ref, which game are you watching. Get a grip of this game"

Consider how you would deal with this situation. Play out the situation and practice the response as a group. Ensure your response utilizes the 4 step approach.

Scenario 3

At a U10 game, a parent is clearly getting frustrated with the young inexperienced referee. They begin to gesticulate towards them and begin to make comments such as "C'mon ref, which game are you watching. Get a grip of this game". You intervene successfully and seem to have diffused the situation. However at the end of the game the parent's team lost and they are now heading across the field to confront the referee. You try to intervene but they won't relent and end up threatening you and the referee before storming off.

Consider how you would deal with this situation. Play out the situation and practice the response as a group. Ensure your response utilizes the 4 step approach.



Scenario 4

At a U13 travel game a supportive parent starts off the game with supportive comments to her daughter. As the game progresses, she continues with the positive encouragement for her daughter, but also begins making comments about other players such as “Oh, don’t do that (Claire..)”, “You should have passed it wide there (Jenny...)”, “Come on (Lauren...) you need to get back and help defend.”

Consider how you would deal with this situation. Play out the situation and practice the response as a group. Ensure your response utilizes the 4 step approach.

Scenario 5

At a U9 game, a number of parents are watching their first competitive game. They are generally being supportive but whenever the ball crosses the half way line they begin getting all excited shouting “Go on, keep going, shoot!”, “C’mon, put that ball in that goal”. This is accompanied by huge sighs when the ball doesn’t go in the goal.

Consider how you would deal with this situation. Play out the situation and practice the response as a group. Ensure your response utilizes the 4 step approach.

Scenario 6

At a U8 game, a parent is very vocal and is consistently telling their child what to do. During breaks they pull them to one side further explaining what they think the child should do. Consider how you would deal with this situation. Play out the situation and practice the response as a group. Ensure your response utilizes the 4 step approach.

Scenario 7

At a U7 game a number of parents are standing on the end line being helpful giving balls back to the coaches when the ball goes out of play. However, each time a player starts running towards the goal where they are standing they begin cheering loudly “Get him, get him”. This is intimidating to the player approaching the goal, who stops rather than continuing towards the goal.

Consider how you would deal with this situation. Play out the situation and practice the response as a group. Ensure your response utilizes the 4 step approach.

Scenario 8

At a U7 game, a child is going through a period where they are not involved in the game. In fact, they are kneeling on the floor picking pieces of grass. Their parent is on the sideline telling them “Get in the game, go get the ball”. The child looks up but does nothing, so the parent tells them again.

Consider how you would deal with this situation. Play out the situation and practice the response as a group. Ensure your response utilizes the 4 step approach.

Scenario 9

At a U6 game, a child doesn’t seem to want to play. They sit on the floor and tell their parents “I don’t want to play”. The parent tells them strongly “You have to play, you have to get involved. I haven’t brought you to practice for you to sit here and do nothing.”

Consider how you would deal with this situation. Play out the situation and practice the response as a group. Ensure your response utilizes the 4 step approach.



Examples of encouraged and unacceptable sideline language and behavior

Encouraged	Unacceptable
<i>Related to players:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General encouraging remarks to players “Good job” “Great effort” “Keep trying hard” “Good hustle” • Congratulating good play, good sportsmanship, good effort • Calm friendly approach • Caring sympathetic manner • Allowing players to make mistakes • Helping, supporting coach • Shaking hands regardless of result • Providing love/support for children regardless of the result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing commentary of game • Constantly telling player what to do • Raised voice • Emotional outbursts • Expressing / demonstrating frustration • Encroaching into space of assistant referee or into field of play • Criticizing players mistakes • Confronting own child, other players, coaches, parents, officials • Any form of anger • Argumentative behavior • Patronizing language
<i>Related to referees:</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaking hands at the end of a game • Encouraging comments such as “Good game ref”, or “Thank you”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any public negative or patronizing remarks regarding the referees performance • Demonstrating frustration towards refereeing decisions. • Making any negative comments regarding the referees performance to coaches, other parents, players, or the officials. • Confronting the referee to explain decisions after the game

Coach guidance notes

- Call the parent concerned
 - Outline the problem and ask for a face to face meeting
- At the meeting with the parent
 - Outline the nature of the issue
 - Ask for any mitigating reasons which may have caused them to act inappropriately
 - Identify the changed behavior required
 - If parent shows understanding and indicates willingness to change the coach should inform the parent that they will be monitoring their behavior for the next few games.
- Team coach to advise
 - TSL manager of this. If parents behavior doesn't change in the next few games, inform the parent that the matter will be referred to back to TSL manager who will refer the matter to the R & D committee



- If parent refuses to meet or demonstrates unwillingness to change behavior, team coach should inform TSL manager of this. TSL manager will then refer the matter to the R & D committee

Original document prepared by Neal Bowes, Certified Sport Psychologist, SIMPLYaphilosophy. Further revisions by Bob Maynes, Director of Coaching, MYS TSL Committee and Neal Bowes and José Ochoa, Sportsmanship Director

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