



As of October, 2023

The best way to think about a volunteer's relationship with Marblehead Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) is that the volunteering role comes with both privileges and obligations.

While thinking of volunteering as a privilege may seem to be a stretch, we all know that volunteering to help coach children soccer provides a valuable opportunity to positively impact young lives by fostering their physical fitness, teamwork skills, and self-confidence. Volunteers can contribute to the development of a sense of discipline and sportsmanship in our young people. Moreover, coaching children provides a valuable opportunity to improve one's own leadership skills, sense of empathy, increase their understanding of the sport and build meaningful connections with players and their families.

Importantly, when a particular child on a volunteer's team is his or her own child, the benefits above feel even more impactful. Volunteering gives parents a chance to model behaviors of service for others, show our children we are present for them, get an enhanced view as to how our children manage challenging situations first-hand. The value of spending this quality time bonding with our children should never be underestimated. It is also important to understand that while coaching your own child can be rewarding, it's important to maintain a balance between the parent and coach roles.

Volunteering affords a tremendous opportunity to model how we treat others fairly, provide constructive feedback, and create a learning environment where players can enjoy the sport and foster players independence and autonomy. Volunteers are also privileged to be able to serve as an example of how we show respect for our competition, officials, and our neighbors in other towns.

As volunteers we embrace this service mentality and enjoy these privileges. We also recognize that all of MYSA volunteers are providing a similar service role for the betterment of our community. This is the very fabric of what we are aiming to do with MYSA. Volunteers give significant time and energy in service of others and while we may not always have the results that we want, we are indeed privileged to be in this role together.

We thank you all so much for your generous time given and dedication to the children of Marblehead!

Coach Behavior Guidelines

MYSA has a Code of Conduct for coaches at all levels that includes policies for egregious violations of conduct and a process of punitive actions by the MYSA as enforcement.

However, it is also very important that all MYSA coaches more generally consider themselves part of the overall MYSA “team” and act accordingly. The below guidelines are intended to help MYSA coaches at all levels understand their responsibilities to their team and the overall program. It will become obvious that striving to following these guidelines will absolutely enhance a volunteer’s ability to maximize their enjoyment of the privileges noted above. Importantly, while coaches should be provided feedback by MYSA leadership if they are consistently violating these guidelines, these are not intended to provide a punishment function beyond what is already in the Code of Conduct. We are all imperfect and subject to human fallibility, and the MYSA understands everyone may just have a “bad day”. However, coaches at all levels should note that consistent adherence to these guidelines will also be a factor for the MYSA Travel Coach Selection Committee’s decision-making process for determining Travel (G4 and older) coach selections.

Overall, MYSA coaches at all levels are expected to demonstrate:

- A commitment to player development and fun over winning, although this is tempered by the fact that the effort to win can be part of the fun
- A commitment to *roughly* equal playing time for all, and especially not favoring your own child over others in terms of positioning, playing time and feedback
- Clear communications to team families, including using TeamSnap to provide necessary information about scheduling, timely alerts, overall team feedback, etc.
- For Travel coaches, a solid understanding of the logistical requirements for game play within the framework of the ECYSA league that we play in.
 - o Being prepared for game days with game cards, rosters, credentials etc.
 - o Understanding the ECYSA rules around game forfeits, cancelations, and the need to work through MYSA officers (particularly the VP Travel) around such instances.
 - o Understanding the time and space constraints around practice times and field availability
 - o Proactively working with the appropriate personnel to properly request schedule changes – generally, this means working with age group coordinators, gender VPs and the VP Travel.
 - o Ensuring that teams have adequate players to compete in matches while abiding by the ECYSA rules and MYSA guidelines around player passes.
- Being positive and constructive in all communications with players and families and refs
 - o A stress on positive reinforcement over negative reinforcement in feedback
 - o Refraining from verbally comparing one player to another
 - o Being kind and respectful of all referees regardless of their age, their status as an official or volunteer, or the calls made during the course of the game. A good rule of thumb is to say nothing to the referee unless it involves the safety of the players.
- A recognition that while they may be coaching an individual team, they are also part of the overall MYSA team.
 - o Supporting MYSA’s goal to provide roughly equal resources to all teams equally within an age group.

- Understanding that other MYSA volunteers are also just unpaid volunteers, and are also here for the same reason you are – to help the kids of Marblehead.
- Being kind and respectful and supportive of fellow coaches, both co-coaches on the same team and coaches on other teams.
- Refraining from bad-mouthing other coaches, seeking constructive instead of confrontational resolutions when there are conflicts, and refraining from criticizing MYSA leadership in communications with the team and families. Not that the MYSA leadership or other volunteer coaches are above reproach, of course. But we all have to be ambassadors for the MYSA with the broader community and so we should collectively seek to resolve our internal differences of opinion directly rather than take it indirectly to families of players.
- Refraining from bad-mouthing other MYSA families in communications both within and outside of MYSA settings, regarding MYSA-related matters.
- Committing to complete the unfortunately time-consuming but still legally necessary trainings and certifications around concussions, health and safety and Safe Sport without harassing either MYSA volunteers or Mass Youth Soccer staff. Committing to following the guidelines imparted by those trainings.
- A commitment to becoming a technically capable coach to best support player development
 - Undertaking US Soccer coaching certifications and at least looking into additional coach training as available and interested
 - Following and actively supporting training curricula for your age group as laid out by external trainers and/or the VP of Technical Development
 - Filling out seasonal Coach Evaluations and providing them in a timely manner