

U11 – U19 FIELD MARSHALL PROGRAM

Background:

- Referee retention issues seem to have been an increasing issue over the past few years in Saskatoon. This referee shortage is caused by many reasons, but the most worrisome is the abuse from team officials and spectators towards the youth referees, especially during the outdoor season. The abuse can come in many forms but, it is the verbal abuse, which is personal, provocative and public in regard to the referee's on-field performance that cause for the youngest referees to quit. It is a possibility they will make a mistake every game, but we have to encourage them to learn and improve rather than to insult/degrade their refereeing.
- This unacceptable behavior towards our youth and new officials must be addressed as a **priority** particularly if soccer is to have an adequate supply of referees.
- A similar program was started by Calgary Youth Soccer in Outdoor 2008 and within one season they saw improvements in the retention of youth referees.

Specifics:

- The Field Marshall Program is intended to assign one individual from each team to speak up on behalf of the referee among their fellow parents/spectators. The program started in Outdoor 2015 and includes U11 to U19 levels of play.
- All teams participating in the U11, U13, U15, and U19 SYSI league play must designate an individual at each game (home and away) to act as a Field Marshall.
- The individual acting as the Field Marshall (FM) must be named on the team's game sheet (could be on one of the tabs for ASST Coach). **Teams will be fined if they do not list their FM on the game sheet (U11, U13, U15, and U19).**
- The Field Marshall is to wear any arm band, bib as identification.

Responsibilities of Field Marshall:

- Position yourself in the middle of your team's half of the spectators' seating area.
- Monitor the behavior of your teams' parents.
- The Field Marshall is expected to act on behalf of the referee by reminding parents to keep their comments to themselves and refrain from vocalizing their complaints during the game.
- Quickly diffuse potential problems before they arise by either being visible or calmly speaking with the individual(s) involved.
- Deal with, and act on, inappropriate comments, gestures and/or general unsporting behavior directed at referees, players or any other individual by your teams' spectators but please avoid getting into a confrontation. If someone is still hostile after being asked to calm down, please gather as much information but do not put yourself in a dangerous position. **The Field Marshall will not interfere with the coach but can gather information should he/she deems it necessary.**
- The FM's are **not** expected to put themselves in a situation which may compromise their safety and instead are asked to contact SYSI at programs@saskatoonyouthsoccer.ca and fill a Game Misconduct/Incident report form located on SYSI website. When dealing with this type of issues, the Game Misconduct Report of the FM will be used to make a decision as a third choice (main two being the game sheet and Game Misconduct Report and/or Incident Report filled by the referee). If only the FM will submit a Game Misconduct/Incident Report, that form will be filed for future reoccurrences.
- The Field Marshall is expected to support the referee when requested by the official to do so should a situation require this.

Fines:

- The administration of warning letters and enforcing fines will be the responsibility of the SYS Office. The warning letter would be sent to the team contact as well and the zone. Any further offense will result in an invoice to the zone responsible for that team. It will be the zones responsibility to pay the fine ~ this is the same process used for invoicing for team forfeit fees.
- The fine for not participating in the Field Marshall Program will be as follows:
 - a) First Offense: Warning Letter
 - b) Second offense: \$ 50
 - c) Third Offense: \$ 75
 - d) Fourth Offense: \$100
- Any team found to be consistently not participating in the program shall be subject to further disciplinary action.

Zone Discipline:

- Based on any official report, SYSI will forward the zones the appropriate documents and each zone will investigate the incident and act accordingly. If the issue has not been dealt with on a satisfactory manner by the zone, SYSI's Discipline Committee will decide on a resolution.
- The number of games suspensions should follow the same format as the Ejections paragraph in the SYSI Rules and Regulations (more specific to the Abusive Language/Indecent Gesture paragraph).

Referee Feedback: Any questions/comments/complaints/compliments in regard to the officiating should be directed to Referee Assignor or Program Coordinator (who will forward those e-mails to Saskatoon & District Soccer Referees Association).

Guideline for scheduling:

- Scheduling the FM is at the discretion of the team manager/coach and could be one of the following options (but not limited to):
 - a) 1 game per parent/game in alphabetical order (but not necessarily) at the first team meeting;
 - b) 2 or 3 parents that want to share the duties decided at the team meeting;
 - c) Or one parent assigned on the spot right before the game.
- SYSI recommends that the assigning of the FM be done in advance in collaboration with the parents and if a parent will not be able to make it to the assigned game, they can always find a replacement. FM can't to be assistant coaches and assistant coaches can't be FM at the same time.