



## **Zero Tolerance Policy**

Youth sports are a great opportunity for a child to build self-esteem and learn fundamental skills. It's also an opportunity for adults to become positive role models and to teach the value and importance of good sportsmanship.

Our priority is development not winning. Our club philosophy is long term player development, and again, winning is not the ultimate goal. Force Academy wants you to enjoy the great game of soccer, and we are providing this information in an effort to assist you and your child in gaining a greater understanding of player development and the game of soccer.

The increase in aggressive and violent behavior towards referees, spectators and players during Ontario based league events, has encouraged Force Academy to adopt a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**. This policy applies to all coaches, players, parents and other supporters and referees effective immediately. Drinking alcohol, smoking, or use of illegal substances is prohibited during Force Academy practices, games, or events. Abusive and obscene language, violent play, violent conduct, fighting, and other behavior (including but not limited to sarcasm, taunting, etc.) will not be tolerated during any club event.

Ultimate responsibility for the actions of coaches, players, and spectators resides with the member clubs. It is the responsibility of the coaches to provide referee support and spectator control.

**This policy will apply at all times** - prior to, during and after the game, at the soccer field, and its immediate surrounding areas. It is the responsibility of the clubs to provide instructions to their coaches on how they are expected to carry out this responsibility. Force Academy will be assessing each incident on an individual basis.

## **Parents and Spectators**

No parent or other spectator shall persistently address the referee or assistant referees at any time.

This includes but is not limited to:

1. Spectators shall not make derogatory comments to players of either team.
2. Spectators shall not dispute calls during or after the game.
3. Spectators shall not advise the referee to watch certain players or attend to rough play.
4. Spectators shall not yell at the referee, EVER, including criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, discriminatory comments or feedback of any kind before, during, or after the game.
5. Spectators shall not yell at, argue with, taunt, purposely disrespect, disparage other spectators, parents, players, officials or volunteers.

Below are some simple rules you should observe. **PLEASE CONSIDER THEM CAREFULLY!**

1. Do not shout instructions to your child. This only causes confusion, since the coach has already instructed your child on how to play. If you do shout instructions, your child will probably try to please you and the coach at the same time. In trying to do two things at one time, the child becomes unable to handle his loyalties and ends up pleasing neither parent nor coach.
2. Cheer for your child when he/she plays the ball well. However, remember that your child is a member of a team. Let the other players know you support them too.
3. Suffer in silence (or moan softly) whenever something occurs that goes against your child's team. A display of anger may inflame a delicate situation resulting in embarrassment for you or your child. Some parents embarrass their own children by making a spectacle of themselves.
4. Do not run up and down the sidelines. Find a comfortable place to sit down or stand,

relax and enjoy the match.

5. Do not shout insults or verbally abuse the referee. It's hard for a child to learn respect for the referee or other officials when their parents set a poor example. The referee can and will stop the match if the crowd becomes discourteous.

6. Set the tone for good sportsmanship by adopting a positive attitude if your team loses. Compliment your child upon his/her good plays and ignore the mistakes. Your child will be happy you noticed his good qualities.

The only allowable exceptions to the above are:

1. Spectators may respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation with a parent or spectator.
2. Spectators may point out an emergency or safety issues, such as a player down on the field or observed lightning.

### **Players**

Communications between players and referees are governed by the FIFA Laws of the Game. Penalties for violating the Laws of the Game will be governed by the Laws themselves and the rules of Force Academy

### **Coaches and Bench Personnel**

It is the responsibility of all coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players and supporters in all matches. Failure to do so undermines the referee's authority and the integrity of the game, resulting in a hostile environment for players, the referee, coaches, bench personnel and spectators. As role models for all of the participants and spectators, coaches participating in a Force Academy event are expected to be supportive of, and to applaud the effort, good play, and sportsmanship on the part of ALL players from either team in a contest. By example, coaches and bench personnel are expected to show that although they are competing in a game, participants at all times have respect for the opponent, referees and spectators.

Force Academy will not tolerate negative behavior exhibited either by demonstrative actions and gestures or by ill-intentioned remarks, including those addressed toward the referees, players or coaches of an opposing team.

- Coaches exhibiting hostile, negative, sarcastic, or otherwise ill-intentioned behavior toward referees, opposing players or coaches will be subject to sanction by the referee and subsequent sanctions may be imposed by the club.
- Coaches shall not interact directly or indirectly with the coaches or players of the opposing team during the game in any manner that may be construed as negative, hostile or sarcastic either by way of demonstrative actions and gestures or by ill-intentioned remarks.
- Coaches shall not offer dissent to any call made by the officials at any time.

Coaches shall not address the referee during the game except to:

- Respond to a referee who has initiated a conversation
- Point out emergency or safety issues
- Make substitutions
- Ask the referee to repeat a call (this should be infrequent)
- Ask for the time remaining in the half (this should be infrequent)

Coaches are allowed to ask a referee after a game, in a polite and constructive way, to explain a Law or foul but not judgment calls made in a game.

- Polite and friendly concern can be exchanged with the referee. If the polite tone of the conversation changes, the referee may abandon the exchange at any time.
- Absolutely no sarcasm, harassment or intimidation is allowed.

### **Penalties**

1. If any game is interrupted because of behavioral issues, involved parties will have to comply with a Force Academy and/or Ontario Soccer committee suspension and a club suspension.

2. Depending on the gravity of the incident various suspensions may include the following disciplinary actions by the club:

- a) 3 months suspension from practices and games
- b) 6 months suspension from practice and games

c) 1 year suspension from practice and games

d) Release from the club

**Play with integrity:** One of the most essential lessons a child can learn from sports is to follow the rules. Make sure your team understands the rules and doesn't break them, even if they have the opportunity to get away with it.

**Respect the officials:** It's important to teach not only our young athletes but also our parents and coaches to respect the referees and officials. Our kids have a watchful eye and take notice when parents and coaches are disrespectful.

**Be a good sport.** This means doing what we can to lift our teammates up and help them reach their potential. Being a good teammate means also being a good person on and off the field regardless of the outcome.

**Maintain self-control.** Keep your cool, have a positive attitude, and don't overreact during practice or games. Be encouraging of other players.

**Let the coaches coach:** Avoid chiming in with your coaching advice for the team, or other parents. Let those in charge run the plays.