

# ELHYSA's Field Marshal Program

Adopted May 2007 for Fall 2007 Season

Document revised and presented by Richard Bailey

**Rationale:** The purpose of this program is to proactively establish a group of parents whose focus is to minimize problems at the soccer games that arise from inappropriate behavior by coaches, players, or parents.

**What is a Field Marshal?** A field marshal is a trained parent volunteer who supervises the game sidelines at the park. The Field Marshal is not a referee and is not involved in the decisions made by the referee.

**How many are needed?** In August, teams provide ELHYSA with a list of 3 parent volunteers. The goal is to have at least one marshal present at the park every time ELHYSA has games in the fall season.

**What are the qualifications?**

- The willingness to monitor the field condition and game behavior of coaches, spectators, referees, and players.
- KidSafe Pass.
- No soccer knowledge or skills are required.
- Field Marshal training is highly encouraged.

**Is there a special identification?** ELHYSA provides a special identification card and vest for field marshals.

**What if I can't attend a game and I'm the designated Field Marshal?** Be sure to find a replacement from among the other trained, parent volunteers for your assignment. Also contact the Field Marshal Coordinator.

**What do I monitor?** You will monitor the sidelines during the game. Specifically, you will watch over two things on both sides of the field:

- *Where the coaches and spectators stand.* Coaches & players on one side of field, spectators on opposite side. Only those with KidSafe passes are allowed on the player side of the field. There should be no exceptions to this rule. In general, coaches and spectators must stand at least 6 feet back from the sidelines. This is to ensure the safety of the players and to make it easier for referees to observe the play of the game (and make good calls). Many adults forget these rules and need to be reminded frequently. If a coach or spectator strays beyond these areas, please ask the person to move back into the designated area.

Also, a coach (except in Fun League) or spectator must NEVER enter the field unless invited by the referee to do so. The referee will only invite a coach if a player is injured. In these cases, the coach is only to attend to the player and then leave the field. The coach should not engage the referee in a discussion of what happened or intimidate the referee about how to make a call.

· *The verbal and nonverbal discourse that the coaches and spectators may direct toward the referee and the players.* An occasional “Ah, ref!” or “What was that?” will occur. However, continued disparaging or negative remarks toward the referee or players must be stopped. In addition, coaches who continually yell or scream at their players should be reminded to “tone it down.” Watch the coaches and spectators for both teams for behavior that could be harassing or intimidating to a youth referee or to players. At the direction of the referee, intervene and redirect inappropriate behavior if necessary.

### **What is the referee’s job in terms of negative coach or sideline behavior?**

The referee has the full authority over all activities related to the game, including the behavior of those on the sidelines. If behavior is unnecessarily negative toward the referee or the players, the referee is supposed to stop the game briefly and advise the coach to bring the situation under control. In extreme cases, the referee can remove the coach from the field or abandon the game

### **What are the rules and consequences?**

Dissent directed towards any referee, the decisions of the referee, or any player taking part in the match **is not tolerated by ELHYSA**. Coaches are responsible for their own behavior, the behavior of their players, other team officials and all spectators on their sideline.

**The referee in dealing with dissent need not issue warnings.** In the event of dissent, the referee may do any of the following:

- Stop play until the administration of the requested action is completed.
- Send the coach off or request a spectator to leave the area/field.
- Request that all spectators leave the area/field, except for the adult team officials and the extra players.
- Abandon the game.

As stated in law 5 of FIFA Laws of the Game, one of the powers and duties the referee is to **“Takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may at his discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surround.”**

In addition, **“The decisions of the referee regarding behavior of coaches, players, and fans are final.”**

Actions taken by a referee in cautioning or removing coaches, players, and fans during the course of a match cannot be appealed or overturned. In dealing with dissent of players, the referee can issue a verbal warning, a caution (**yellow card**), or a send off (**red card**). The referee may warn, caution, or send off coaches or fans as well. However, if a coach, player

or spectator has, in the opinion of that referee, committed a “sending-off offense,” that person or persons must leave the area before the game is allowed to resume.

In addition, any ELHYSA participants (coach, players, parents and their spectators) found in violation of this rule, which includes the use of foul and abusive language or gestures, threats or physical contact with the referee, will be barred from ELHYSA activities for the remainder of the season. In addition, any coach who is sent off will be required to appear before the ELHYSA Disciplinary Committee prior to returning to coaching.

### **How do I stop the negative behavior of a parent or spectator?**

The marshal should take the lead of the referee in handling such problems. Often, it is sufficient merely to go stand by someone or to engage someone adjacent in a conversation. If that doesn't work, and if the referee asks, the marshal may approach the coach of the team and privately ask him or her to attend to the conduct of the person in question. Under STYSA rules, the coach has full responsibility for the behavior of the players and the parents, even if they are on the other side of the field. If necessary, remind the coach of this responsibility and that the individual may be asked to leave the field if the behavior continues. Ultimately, the referee may stop the game if the problem persists.

### **What if the coach is the problem?**

Use the same strategy: under the leadership of the referee, remind the coach that the game is to be a positive experience for all and that the behavior is not creating a positive environment for the referee, players, and/or spectators. Remind the coach of the potential for a send-off violation, which will require the coach to leave the field and will result in the coach being banned from the next regular season game and possibly other sanctions from the club or association.

**Should I stop the game if there's a problem?** No. Only the referee may stop the game.

**What if we need immediate advice on the field?** You may contact \_\_\_\_\_ on game days by calling \_\_\_\_\_.

**Where should I stand?** Stand away from both teams in a “neutral” corner of the field. If there is more than one game being played, you should make yourself available at all games. Ideally, you might rotate through the several games and observe from the four corners of the field. Be sure to maintain a good distance from either team so that both the referee and the coaches and spectators know you are the field marshal. This also makes it easier for the referee to find you if necessary.

**What do I do before the game?** Home games cannot begin without your presence. Introduce yourself to the referee and to the two coaches. Establish with the referee what his/her ideas are about game control and how he/she might want to employ you. Reiterate to the coaches the purpose of your job, and what the referee has asked you to monitor during the game. Make sure the referee knows where you will be standing and work out a trouble signal.

**What's the bottom line?** You are not the referee or the referee manager. Your job is to stand up for the referee – NO MATTER WHAT. Even if you disagree with what the referee is doing, your job is to support his or her decisions. The referee's call is final, and your job is to give the referee the support and encouragement he or she needs to employ his or her authority in cases of extreme negative behavior on the part of a coach or a spectator. If you cannot do this, you should not volunteer for this job.

## Training 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 U11 game, a parent is clearly getting frustrated with the referee. They begin to gesticulate towards them and begin to make comments such as "C'mon ref. Get control 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.

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## Appendix 1: Example of encouraged and unacceptable sideline language and behavior

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

## Appendix 2: Guidance notes for coaches

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