

## **Zero Tolerance Policy**

Youth sports are a fantastic opportunity for a child to build self-esteem and learn fundamental skills. It is 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 philosophy is long term player development, and again, **winning is not the goal**. The Muscatine Girls Softball Association wants you to enjoy the great game of softball, and we are providing this information to assist you and your child in gaining a greater understanding of player development and the game of softball.

The increase in aggressive and violent behavior towards referees during events had forced the MGSA to adopt a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY. This policy applies to all Umpires, Coaches, Players, Parents, and all other supporters effective immediately. Drinking alcohol, smoking or use of illegal substances is prohibited during practices and games. 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 event.

It is the responsibility of the Coaches to provide referee support. This policy will always apply prior to, during and after the practice or game, and its immediate surrounding areas. MGSA will be assessing each incident on an individual basis.

### **PARENTS AND SPECTATORS**

No Parent or other spectator shall persistently address the Umpire or Assistant Umpires at any time. This includes but is not limited to:

Spectators shall not make derogatory comments to players of either team.

Spectators shall not dispute calls during or after the game.

Spectators shall not advise the umpire to watch certain players or attend to rough play.

Spectators shall not yell at the umpire, EVER, including criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, discriminatory comments, or feedback of any kind before, during or after the game.

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 manage her loyalties and ends up pleasing neither parent nor coach.

2. Cheer for your child when she plays 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. Find a comfortable place to sit down or stand; Relax and enjoy the game.

5. DO NOT shout insults or verbally abuse the Umpire. It is hard for a child to learn respect for the Umpire or other officials when their parents set a poor example. The Umpire can and will stop the game if the crowd becomes discourteous.

6. Set the tone for good sportsmanship by adopting a positive attitude if your team loses. Compliment your child on her good plays, hits, catches, hustle, communication, positive attitude and ignore the mistakes. Your child will be happy you noticed her good qualities.

**Remember-**Your child will forget about today's game. Next week she will probably have forgotten the score. However, both of you will remember the fun time the child had playing.

The only allowable exceptions to the above are:

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

## **COACHES**

It is the responsibility of all the Coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players and supporters in all practices and games. Failure to do so undermines the Umpires authority and the integrity of the game, resulting in a hostile environment for Players, Umpires, Coaches and Spectators. As role models for all the participants and spectators, Coaches participating in MGSA events are expected to be supportive of, and to applaud the effort, good play, and sportsmanship on the part of ALL Players from either team. For example, Coaches are expected to show that although they are competing in a game, participants always have respect for the opponent, Umpires, and spectators.

MGSA will NOT tolerate any negative behavior exhibited either by demonstrative actions and gestures or by ill-intentioned remarks, including those addressed toward the Umpires, opposing players or Coaches will be subject to penalties that may be imposed.

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

1. Respond to an Umpire who has initiated a conversation
2. Point out emergency or safety issues
3. Make substitutions
4. Ask the Umpire to repeat a call (this should be infrequent)

## **PENALTIES**

If any game is interrupted because of behavioral issues, involved parties will have to comply with the MGSA board.

A written or verbal reprimand to a coach is a warning that survives the ball year and the following season. Two written or verbal reprimands in one ball year are grounds for immediate suspension by the Board of Directors.

Depending on the gravity of the incident, various suspensions may include the following disciplinary actions by the Board:

- Automatic Suspension of 1-10 consecutive game(s) and placed on probation for the rest of the current season and all the following season.

Probation refers to a trial period or review process where a coach's performance, behavior, and adherence to team expectations or school policies are evaluated. During this time, the coach's actions, decisions, and overall impact on the team are closely monitored.

If the coach fails to meet the established expectations during the probationary period, they may face disciplinary actions, including suspension from games or dismissed. Probation can serve as a chance for a coach to demonstrate improvement and make necessary adjustments before a final decision is made. Probation will stay in place for the rest of current season and all of the following season.

Depending on the gravity of the incident, various suspensions may include the following disciplinary actions by the Board:

- Automatic Suspension of 1-10 consecutive game(s) and placed on probation for the rest of the current season and all the following season.
- Any physical confrontation will result in immediate removal from the program.

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

**Respect the officials:** It is important to teach not only our young athletes but also our Parents and Coaches to respect the Umpires. 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 do not overreact during practices 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 practices and games.

As adults participating in youth softball, you play a vital role in shaping not only athletes but young people of character. Please emphasize playing with integrity by teaching your players to follow the rules at all times. Model and promote respect for umpires, as athletes closely observe how adults respond to adversity. Encourage good sportsmanship by building teammates up, maintaining self-control during practices and games, and fostering a positive team culture regardless of the score. Most importantly, lead with confidence and set the standard, knowing your example has a lasting impact.