



West Virginia Soccer Association

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May 2, 2023

TO: WWSA clubs, WWSA BOD, WWSA staff, registered coaches, referees, administrators and to all parents of WWSA players

FR: Dave Laraba, WWSA Executive Director

RE: Behavior at games and on social media

I do not prepare this type of letter very often, but the issues discussed below must be addressed.

This correspondence is to address some behavior that was exhibited at travel and recreation soccer games this spring as well as the recent use of social media. WWSA is under the US Safe Sport Code and all clubs need to review the code on Prohibited Behavior and Social Media use with all members and parents. See [Risk Management Instructions - Youth | West Virginia Youth Soccer \(wvsoccer.net\)](#) [Participant Safety Hub | U.S. Soccer Official Website \(ussoccer.com\)](#)

There have been some exceptionally good games at WV State League, local leagues, Capital Cup, ECCS, Shawnee Soccer League and other events. However, parental and coaching behavior has been a recurring issue at some of these events. There have also been behavior issues by players. Parents and coaches have been yelling at each other, referees, coaches of other teams and at players from opposing teams. There have also been social media postings by adults making comments concerning opposing players, coaches, clubs, and referees.

THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE! WWSA will take steps, including but not limited to playing games with no parents/spectators in attendance or enforcing silent sidelines if this behavior continues. Social media should be used to congratulate players on their play and post results and accomplishments. Social media utilized for youth soccer should never be used to make negative comments toward anyone and should never be used to belittle or bully anyone! **WWSA clubs are directed to address behavior and social media use to all their members and parents immediately. WWSA Member Clubs should take swift action to address inappropriate behavior at club events. WWSA will deal with any issues of inappropriate behavior at any WWSA events such as WWSA State Cup, Open Cup, United Cup and ODP.**

The US Safe Sport Code, US Soccer and WWSA Player Safety Policies have sections on Prohibited Behavior and Social Media use. These policies are extremely specific and include examples of the types of behavior that are unacceptable. All WWSA registered coaches, referees, administrators, WWSA BOD or staff members are mandatory reporters. Prohibited behavior should be reported to WWSA, US Soccer, US Safe Sport and law enforcement depending on the circumstances and severity. Mandatory reporters are required to report abusive behavior regardless of when the behavior is observed or occurs. Further, it is to be reported regardless of whether the abusive behavior is by a WWSA registered person or by someone that is not registered with the WWSA.

These policies also cover actions by any person toward a minor player or any referee! WVSA has taken and will take immediate action concerning inappropriate behavior directed at a minor player or any Referee in accordance with policies of US Soccer, WVSA and the US Center for Safe Sport, including reporting to Law Enforcement and WV DHHR. WVSA has assisted local clubs and individuals with filling complaints with the US Center for Safe Sport as well as law enforcement and WV DHHR. Comments of a negative, sexual, or threatening nature to minor players and referees are especially abhorrent and can NEVER be tolerated or excused!!!

WVSA member Clubs, Leagues, Associations and Organizations MUST enforce WVSA Participant Safety Policies. Failure to do so could result in a finding of non-Compliance with WVSA Bylaws, could result in being placed in bad Standing and could result in other disciplinary measures.

I understand that only a small number of people are causing these issues, but even one occurrence by one person is too many. Everyone must do their part in calling out inappropriate behavior when it is witnessed.

Please report any and all Risk Management or Safe Sport issues to kristi@wvsoccer.net

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Contact me with any questions at dave@wvsoccer.net