

Travel Parents – Escalation Policy

Drama really has no place in youth sports except for on the field, though it unfortunately often occurs. Open communication is important and coaches should try to be as transparent as possible with parents. While sideline conversations are inevitably going to happen amongst parents, spreading negativity is not going to result in a positive experience for anybody and impacts overall team morale.

At some point this season, you ARE going to disagree with your team's coach. Should any parent have any questions, concerns, issues, problems, etc., the parent needs to bring it to the team's head coach directly. Issues should not be brought to any other team parents, managers, or administrators. That is NOT their responsibility.

Any issues brought forth should be strictly about the player: what they can do to improve, problems that may affect their training or performance, problems they have with other players, injuries/health concerns, etc. Topics that are not to be discussed include: coaching decisions, positioning (U12+), playing time (Division 1 teams only), opinions about other players, team formations, etc.

Playing Time: For all non-Division 1 teams, which includes ALL teams U11 and under, as well as those teams U12 and up playing in Division 2 or below, players should be receiving at least 50% playing time in games. The only exception to this rule is if players are regularly missing practices, in which case playing time is at the discretion of the coach. That said, if a game is 50 minutes (25 minutes per half), and a player receives 20 minutes in a game, that should not constitute a concern. However, if the player has regularly received 20 minutes or less per game, that should be addressed. Understand that 50% playing time does NOT mean equal playing time. Also, there is no playing time requirement for those teams playing in Division 1 in the U12 and older age groups.

Player Positions: For teams U11 and under, players should be exposed to every position. The coach will decide exactly how that will transpire (i.e., rotating positions game-to-game, intra-game, every few games, etc.). For teams U12 and up, positioning players is at the discretion of the coach.

Parents should follow a 24-hour rule. Unless the concern is an emergency situation, players and parents should refrain from presenting issues until at least 24 hours have passed since the issue occurred. 48 hours would be even better. This is typically more conducive to a positive and less confrontational discussion. Immediately before, during or after a game, or during a practice, is not the appropriate time to have these discussions.

Also note that as players mature, they should be expected to advocate for themselves to some degree and try to resolve issues without parental intervention. Obviously, this is not always possible.

Our hope and expectation are that these types of incidents will be few and far between, or completely non-existent altogether. However, should an issue arise, you should take action as soon as possible. Do not wait to act until you have already reached the point of no return. If you have an issue in Game 2, do not wait until after Game 9 to bring it up. At that point, it is likely too late to even satisfactorily resolve the issue.

Should an issue arise, these are the appropriate steps to take:

1. Your first course of action is to have an amicable conversation with the team's head coach. Most of time, this will provide a resolution. Sending an email is not recommended unless you intend to follow it up with a personal conversation. Face-to-face is always best.
2. If after having a conversation with the team's head coach, you are not satisfied with the outcome, or the resolution discussed has not been implemented as agreed to, the first point of escalation is to contact the Club's Head Coach, Joe Cassidy, at coachcassidy@yahoo.com.
 - a. You should provide the player's name, team, and a brief summary of the issue, along with a contact phone number where you can be reached.
 - b. Joe Cassidy will reach out to you to find out more about the issue and will work with the Head of Travel to try to mediate a resolution.
3. In the rare case where speaking with the team's head coach has not worked AND speaking with the Club's Head Coach still has not resolved the issue, the next point of escalation is to contact the Executive Board by emailing us at info@carmelsoccer.com.
 - a. Again, provide the player's name, team, and a brief summary of the issue, along with a contact phone number where you can be reached.
 - b. The Board will decide whether they need to hear the issue and, if so, try to mediate a resolution.

Our goal is to attempt to mediate a resolution to a concern before it escalates into a larger issue. This requires parents to bring up their issue sooner rather than later and to act in a civilized manner when speaking to coaches or board members, as well as other parents.

We also want to remind you that coaches are volunteers. They have stepped up to run a team where, in most cases, nobody else was willing to. They are not professional coaches and will not do everything perfectly. Unfortunately, coaching is a thankless job. It is also virtually impossible to make decisions that make every single parent happy. And like many things in life, coaches are typically only presented with things they've done "wrong". We ask that you keep all of this in mind when speaking with your coach regarding your concerns.