

Milwaukee Kickers Soccer Club

Parent Sideline Expectations

MKSC Sideline Philosophy

MKSC believes that the game is the player's classroom. This means:

- Coaches coach
- Players play
- Referees officiate
- Parents support

This environment results in players being able to think independently, solve problems, and learn from their mistakes.

Creating a Positive Sideline Environment

Parents play a powerful role in shaping a player's soccer experience. The sideline environment can either support learning, confidence, and enjoyment or it can unintentionally create pressure and confusion for the players.

This guide outlines MKSC expectations for parent behavior on the sidelines to ensure a positive, respectful, and development-focused experience for all players, coaches, referees and families.

Why sideline behavior matters

Players are constantly absorbing feedback, both spoken and unspoken. What they hear from the sidelines impacts how they play, learn, and ultimately feel about the game.

- Positive environments improve confidence and decision-making
- Instruction from spectators creates confusion
- Emotional reactions increase player anxiety
- Respectful behavior models sportsmanship

Pro Tip: The best sideline is often the calmest one.

What is encouraged on the Sidelines

Parents are encouraged to support players in simple, positive ways.

- Applauding effort and sportsmanship
- Encouraging all players, not just your own child
- Using positive language
- Supporting team values

Examples of Helpful Support:

- Great effort!
- Nice idea!
- Keep working!

Pro Tip: General encouragement is more effective than specific instructions.

What is not encouraged on the Sidelines

Certain behaviors can interfere with player development and overall enjoyment.

- Giving tactical or technical instructions
- Shouting directions during play
- Coaching from the sidelines
- Questioning referee decisions
- Negative comments towards players, coaches, or officials

Pro Tip: Even well-intended instructions can overwhelm players who are already processing a lot during the game.

Communication with your coach

Open and respectful communication is important, but timing matters.

- Avoid coaching conversations during or immediately after games
- Use appropriate channels of communication
- Allow time for emotions to settle
- Focus conversations on development

Pro Tip: A 24-hour rule after games is often helpful before discussing any concerns.

Respect Referees

Referees are a critical part of the game and are often young or developing officials

- Respect all referee decisions
- Avoid public disagreement or commentary
- Help model respect for authority

Pro Tip: Players learn how to treat referees by watching adults around them.

Supporting your player after games

Post-game conversations shape how players reflect on their experience.

- Let your child lead the conversation
- Focus on effort and enjoyment
- Avoid immediate technical feedback
- Celebrate resilience and learning

Pro Tip: Games are emotional. Sometimes the best support is just listening.

Summary

By supporting MKSC's sideline expectations, parents help to create:

- A safe and positive learning environment
- Confident, independent players
- Respectful interactions among all participants
- A culture aligned with long-term development

Key Contacts & Resources

- Club website: <https://www.mksc.org/>
- Club policies & code of conduct: <https://www.mksc.org/about/policies/>
- Regional contacts: <https://www.mksc.org/regions/>