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Tournament Planning and Participation

The spring/summer soccer season is quickly approaching. Has your team had their player/parent meeting to discuss tournament participation? Have you talked about what the goals for the team are during the season and during tournaments? There are many factors to consider when applying for a tournament.

The following is a list of some of the items that should be included planning your tournament participation:

- Obtain a commitment from the entire team that they will be able to participate during the identified dates. Get the parents involved in the final decision-making when they will be providing the transportation, to and from games or when additional costs will be incurred. (i.e.: bus, airline, hotel arrangements, and extra spending money).
- Evaluate potential conflicts for the weekend.
- Evaluate the type of experience the team is hoping to gain from participation and goals for team and individual player participation.
- Once the decision has been made to apply to the tournament, the application needs to be thoroughly completed, payment made and then the process of acceptance into the event begins.

The most important part of tournament planning is communication. Many of the complaints stem from miscommunication or lack of communication between the players, the parents, the coaches and the tournament. One of the biggest areas for potential disappointment is when teams sign up for tournaments, yet, they have not read the invitation thoroughly for types of teams accepted and rules of participation.

It is important that teams correctly fill out the application. This avoids causing teams to be placed in the wrong gender and/or making the assumption their team can “play up” when this is not part of the tournament offering. Teams can be disappointed when their application is rejected, and or confirmed into the wrong gender/classification of play or told their guest players do not qualify to participate according to the guest player rules of the tournament. As a reminder, U9 and U10 teams cannot play up to U11 or higher in a competitive event per MYSO tournament guidelines.

If there is a legitimate problem occurring during the tournament, it is important to address your concern in writing to the tournament director and committee. It is reasonable to expect that the tournament director or committee member will respond, however, the tournament directors have been advised to deal specifically with the coach or team representative and not with an irate group of people. It is MYSO’s goal to take your concerns seriously and address them with careful thought and consideration for a win-win outcome. The tournament directors want your team to have a terrific experience at their event so you will return again the next year.

Do we as tournament directors make mistakes? We do, but not intentionally. Our hope is that they are minor and they can be taken care of and addressed quickly and to everyone’s satisfaction. By knowing your satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction with a tournament helps us to become better prepared for the next summer.

If you have a recommendation or a commendation for the tournament, please pass it on in writing to the tournament director. Feedback is important to the long-term success of tournaments.

In an effort to look at how players/coaches/parents (fans) can survive tournament weekend, here are the top three suggestions for survival.

Tips for Players

- Allow adequate time to get to the field. (Verify game time/field/restroom/shade location)
- Allow adequate time for a proper warm up including mental preparedness and a review of personal goals.
- Bring adequate amounts of water and ice for warm up, game play, halftime and post game cool down. Each player should have his or her own water bottle!

Tips for Coaches

- Know the rules of the tournament.
- Allow adequate time to get to the tournament headquarters for check-in. Check in preparedness, player's passes signed and laminated, medical release form, roster, any specific form (s) required by the tournament.
- Set personal and team goals prior to the tournament. Reinforce with positive value. Communicate fan behavior expectations prior to the tournament. Relax and have fun and faith in your team!

Tips for Parents/Fans

- Relax and have fun. Have a plan to deal with personal frustration.
- Give positive messages of support and encouragement to your own child and the rest of the team. Leave instructions to the coach.
- Leave the refereeing to the referee.