

Marlboro Soccer Association Travel Soccer Rules

www.marlborsoccer.com

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Welcome to the Marlboro Soccer Association (“MSA”) Travel Soccer Program. The program provides an incredible opportunity for all Marlboro children to grow as soccer players and people. Enjoy the experience and have fun!

The purpose of these policies is to ensure that all Marlboro residents have the opportunity to compete in travel soccer.

MSA Travel Mission Statement - The mission of MSA Travel is to promote and develop the sport of soccer, to develop each soccer player to the maximum of his or her ability and goals, and to foster a spirit of sportsmanship and fellowship within and among all of the players in the township program. MSA Travel is committed to providing the best available facilities, coaches and opportunities for its players within the resources of MSA.

MSA has a strong reputation for player development based on our history and track record. We have adopted the U.S. Soccer training curriculum for our program. Our infrastructure, facilities and teams are in place to support this adjustment across all age groups and genders. We have the scale as a program to manage the transition effectively and ensure our teams in each age group are competing at the highest level possible. Our goal as a program has not changed. We will continue to challenge each player to train, compete and play to their fullest potential.

MSA Travel Directors spent many hours consulting with youth soccer’s governing bodies in NJ as well as numerous other programs in the area. While change requires everyone to adjust in the short term, our implementation approach to the U.S. Soccer mandate is consistent with the guidance from the leagues we participate in as well as other top programs in the area with a similar focus on player development.

The grouping of players will undergo a mandated change nationwide. U.S. Soccer will go back to calendar birth years to align with international standards and Youth National Team programs. The two governing bodies that issue our player cards, NJYS and US Club, will follow these guidelines starting with the 2016-17 season.

- o Players who are U14 and below will be permitted to try out for one age group above. After tryouts, players may be selected to play on the team one age group above, with approval of the Travel Board, but only if the player is selected for the Blue team (the most competitive team) for that age group, based on the tryout standards illustrated below. We are instituting this flexibility in our program to enhance our ability to group players of “like” ability for the best development experience for the player and team.
- o For teams that are U15 and above (high school ages), we will take a more flexible approach to team formation in order to keep teams playing together during this period where college showcases become an important aspect of the development process for many of our players.
- o The team sizes and number of players on the field will also change. Please see the chart below.

Season Age Group	2023-24 Game Format	Players (min)	Players (max)
U6 – U7	4v4	6	12
U8 – U10	7v7	10	12
U11 – U12	9v9	12	14
U13 – U16	11v11	15	18
U17 – U19	11v11	15	20

NOTE: Field dimension changes will be considered for adoption in accordance with our League recommendations.

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Tryouts

Initial tryouts will be held at the Vanderburg Soccer Complex located on Vanderburg Road. Depending on the number of children and the age group, there will be either one (1) or two (2) tryouts for each age group.

Players can try out to play up one age group, which is consistent with NJYS guidelines. The player must be selected for the Blue team and ranked in the top 50% to be eligible to play up. The tryout process will remain consistent with past processes where Tryout Results and Coach's Input/Ratings will be used to create teams. The Travel Directors will be involved in the formation of each team and will determine if players are selected to play up. Players will not be allowed to play up if it prevents a team from being formed.

It is important to understand that our philosophy on players "playing up" has not changed. The vast majority of players will benefit most from playing in their age group. With that said, we are following the guidelines set forth by our governing bodies. The aim for the Travel Directors will be to utilize the flexibility to have players "playing up" in a balanced way that benefits the player, team, and program. "Playing up" does not have to be an all or nothing situation. Players can play on a team in their age group and have opportunities to play up situationally to support their development within the program (e.g. guest play at tournaments or games where US Club Cards are used).

We strongly recommend that each player try out for their own age group even if they try out for the older age group. If the player does not try out for their own age group, they will not be eligible to make a team in that age group.

Should your child become ill, suffer an injury or have a family emergency that prevents the child from making the tryout, please contact one of the Travel Directors to discuss possible solutions. The group for which your child is eligible to tryout is based on birth year. The tryout dates, age groups and registration instructions will be posted on the MSA website. The duration of the tryouts will be approximately 2 hours. Please do not drop your child off and leave the tryout area. Parental assistance maybe required or the tryout time period may be lessened.

All players must wear appropriate soccer attire, including shin guards and soccer cleats. All players must bring a ball and plenty of water. Current travel players MAY NOT wear, or bring, any part of their travel uniforms, including socks and bags.

Goalie tryouts may be held at the end of the field tryout or along with the field tryout. Players interested in playing goalie may be asked to stay and participate in goalie related drills. If your child has goalie gloves, please make sure he/she brings them. Should your child try out for goalie and make the team, the coach has the right to play him/her at that position. If your child does not want to play goalie, do not have them try out for that position.

Travel Team Selection

Players will be notified whether or not they have been selected for a team shortly after the tryout for their age group, but no later than after Memorial Day. Players selected for the highest level team in each age group will be notified first. Each player will have forty-eight (48) hours to accept or decline a position. The onus to reply is on the Parent of the player. If you do not accept or decline within forty-eight (48) hours that is your indication that the position is declined. If after forty-eight (48) hours the position has not been accepted or declined, the next highest rated player will be notified and your child will forfeit his/her place on the team. The selection of the all travel teams is at the discretion of the Travel Directors. The Travel Directors have the discretion to extend the acceptance period in the interests of the program, where situations warrant.

Rosters will be approved by the Travel Directors, based on the tryout results and the Fall & Spring ratings. Ratings will be conducted by the Travel Board approved training company.

In-Season Player Movement

From time to time it may become necessary to move or add players within an age group and within league rules based upon circumstance. The decision to move or add players will be coordinated between the team's Coach, Director of Training & VP of Travel. Permanent player moves or additions will require a majority vote of the Travel Board. A player or parent may choose to not accept the movement between teams.

If a player leaves his/her team to play for a team other than another MSA team after he/she has already accepted a position on an MSA team or during a season, he/she will not be eligible to play Marlboro Travel Soccer again without MSA Travel Board majority vote and Marlboro Recreation Advisory Committee consent.

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If a card transfer request comes thru mid-season (anytime between August and July) the card won't be approved for transfer as our acceptances or commitment to the program is a full year. There are exceptions like moving out of state etc. but must have majority Travel Board approval. The same applies for incoming card movement requests, again based on individual circumstances, the Travel Board can approve with a majority vote and consent from the Marlboro Recreation Advisory Committee.

If a manager has a child that leaves the program, in or after team selection, the Travel Board will make a decision on whether or not removing the manager is in the best interest of the team. However, the manager will not be allowed to be on the coach sideline even if they are allowed to continue to manage.

LEAGUE PLAY – MSA TRAVEL - All team requests to play in a league other than MOSA are subject to the review and majority vote of the Travel Board. (All requests by a team to transfer to EDP/ACELA or ECNL leagues for the Spring season are subject to the majority of the Travel Board).

TEAM NAMES

The team will follow the following naming convention: Birth Year – Team Name – Level (Blue, Gold, White, etc)

Out of Town Players (OTP)

This program is first and foremost for our Marlboro children. These teams will be formed by the MSA Travel Board. Given the current landscape of Youth Soccer, OTPs may be needed to maximize the number of Marlboro players participating and/or to allow for multiple teams within an age group. Any existing OTP's will be grandfathered. OTPs may only be added to Blue teams if they are considered an impact player. Impact players are defined as being evaluated in the top 33% for small sided teams and top 50% for full sided teams. OTPs may be added to Gold/White teams if needed to complete the roster allowing for more in town players to have an opportunity to play on a Marlboro team.

OTP Guidelines:

U6/U8 (4v4) - only on exception basis to fill a team

U9/ U10 (Small Sided 7v7) – Up to 1

U11 & U12 (Small Sided 9v9) – Up to 3

U13 and U14 –(Full Sided 11v11) Up to 33%.

U15 and up –(Full Sided 11v11) Up to 50%.

The MSA Travel Board may vote to approve additional OTP's outside of the guidelines under individual circumstances. Those circumstances should clearly be for the benefit of Marlboro players.

MSA Travel Board majority vote and Marlboro Recreation Advisory Committee consent are required for all OTPs entering the program regardless of circumstance.

Guest Players

Players within the club will be allowed to guest play in league games and tournaments if the following conditions are met:

- There is no conflict with the player's primary team
- The team has two or less subs
- The player does not reduce the playing time on the field for any player already playing near the minimum

Players from outside clubs will be allowed to guest play in tournaments if the following conditions are met:

- The team has two or less subs
- The player does not reduce the playing time on the field for any player already playing near the minimum

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Secondary Passed Players (SPP)

MSA's strong preference is to utilize players who have made a commitment to be part of the program. MSA may utilize players on a secondary pass from other clubs in certain limited situations that benefit the existing players in the program. The player must fill out a Secondary Permission Pass Form to be submitted to league representatives. MSA Travel Board majority vote and Marlboro Recreation Advisory Committee consent are required for all SPPs entering the program regardless of circumstance.

Dual carding

MSA's strong preference is to utilize players who have made a commitment to be part of the program. Once a player commits to the MSA program they are doing so for the entire year. Generally, MSA does not allow players to be carded to another team while also being carded to an MSA team. If an exception is made, it would require a majority vote by the MSA Travel Board along with Marlboro Recreation Advisory Committee consent. If a player is dual carded, that player must prioritize all MSA practices and games over any outside program participation.

Travel Commitment Policy

The following is the Travel Soccer Commitment Policy that is in effect for ALL of the Marlboro Travel Soccer teams. It specifies the penalties to be applied to a player who arrives late, misses, or leaves early from a travel soccer game for another sporting or extracurricular event (i.e. dance recital) excluding illness, educational, & religious obligations. Please note that there will never be a penalty for illnesses, summer vacations, summer camps or educational and religious obligations. MSA encourages our children to compete in multiple sports, especially at the younger ages. We ask the coaches from MSA and the other sports to work on game schedules together so children don't have to miss games. To be fair, we ask that a child be excused from another sports practice to play in an MSA game. This policy would apply to an MSA practice and another sport game as well. We continue to work with the other township sports to allow this flexibility so children can develop skills in multiple sports.

- A. If a player regularly arrives late, misses or leaves early from travel soccer games for another sporting event or extracurricular activity thereby affecting the team or limiting the progress of the team he/she may be asked to appear before the MSA Travel Directors, who will determine the proper course of action, which may include suspension.
- B. If this same player misses or leaves early from another travel soccer game for another sporting event or extracurricular activity after he/she has appeared before the Travel Directors, the Travel Directors can remove the player from the travel soccer program.

The Coach is required to notify the Travel Directors if any violation of this commitment policy occurs. No penalty shall be levied against a player without prior approval of the Travel Directors and advance notification to the player AND the player's parents.

Time Commitment

Through U14, the program normally consists of playing two 10-game seasons, Fall and Spring. During the Fall and Spring seasons, practices and games require 4.5 to 6 hours per week (excluding travel time). This is typically broken down to at least two 90-minute practices, and a minimum of one weekly league game. Tournaments may require more time for certain weeks. We fully expect that the Coach will work with corresponding coaches of other sports that may conflict to best work out a non-conflicting practice schedule. It is expected that a player on a Top Flight EDP team will compete in league seasons as well as the Summer and Winter. These teams are the most competitive in our program and it is expected that these teams will play in at least 4 tournaments combined in the Fall and Spring and 2 tournaments in the Summer.

Summer Soccer Camp

In the weeks leading up to the Marlboro Soccer Tournament, all travel teams participate in a week-long soccer camp. The camp is staffed by professional trainers and provides a great opportunity for teams to work together, have fun, and get prepared for the season. All teams and all players are expected to participate. The training company providing the Summer camp training will need to meet the same requirements of training companies outlined below.

Winter Training

During the winter, U7 - U14 age groups will typically have one training session per week in the Marlboro School Gyms. Teams may also play in an optional indoor league or tournament or train a 2nd day at another facility. It is strongly recommended that each child participate in the Winter training to continue their development from the Fall to the Spring.

Fees and Family Commitment

There are certain costs inherent in the participation in the travel program. Listed below are program related costs; they do not reflect additional costs agreed upon by individual teams.

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1. **Estimated Financial Commitment Per Player**

- A) Community Pass Fee- \$450 to \$500 estimated based league played...will be paid at time of acceptance on a team for following Season. This is nonrefundable.
Community Pass for all travel players are established by Marlboro Recreation and will be paid at time of registration. This fee covers both the Fall and Spring seasons. This Marlboro Township Recreation fee covers the cost of field maintenance, lights, referees, league fees, gym fees, recreation salaries and overhead. Note that High School age teams that only play in the Spring will pay half of the fees noted above, or any amount established by Marlboro Recreation) for the Spring Season.
- B) MSA endorsed summer soccer camp (\$125) which occurs the weeks leading up to the Marlboro Soccer Tournament.
- C) Uniform costs (approximately \$150).
- D) Trainer Fees - Teams collect \$350 per player each Fall and Spring season to cover the cost of professional coaches.
- E) Winter - Any winter program will range between \$125 and \$350 depending on the amount of training, and/or participation in an indoor league or tournament.
- F) Summer - A team may choose to play in the summer. This is optional and at the discretion of the Coach with the approval of the Travel Directors. We estimate that any summer travel program will range between \$200 and \$350 depending on the amount of training and tournaments.
- G) A team may choose to add an optional skills session. These sessions typically range between \$150 and \$200 per season depending on how many kids participate.
- H) Individual training is also available at an additional cost. The cost of this will range from \$50 to \$100 per session depending on the number of children and the trainer. This is arranged separately by the parent and the training company and not through the team.

2. **Annual Fundraiser (AFR) Requirement**

- o U8-U9 Teams - \$2,300
- o U10- U12 Teams - \$2,800
- o U13-U14 Teams - \$3,700

If a team is not playing in the annual Marlboro Tournament, and does not raise the required funds, the team will not receive their end of season Fall and Spring reimbursements.

3. **Comment on Fundraising**

Many programs require a certain amount of fundraising to sustain their programs throughout the year for such activities as sponsored training, field lighting, and tournament reimbursement, etc. Currently, our major fundraiser for the year is the Marlboro Soccer Tournament and the Annual Fundraiser. Listed above are the minimal amounts each team is responsible to raise in order to sustain our program for the year. While we will accept your personal checks, please look to the local businesses to support our program. Many of the businesses are more than happy to contribute and advertise with us. We also have available field sponsorships for those companies or businesses that would like to have more visibility with a field banner. The money raised through the AFR and field sponsorships provide for each team a number of sponsored training sessions with certified trainers in the Fall and Spring seasons, tournament reimbursements, balls, field lights and much more. The more money we raise, the more we give back to the players. AFR forms can be found at www.marlborosoccer.com. If a family does not fulfill the financial commitment of the AFR, the amount will be subtracted from the reimbursement due to the team for tournaments.

4. **Tournaments**

An Annual Marlboro Soccer Tournament will be held the weekend before Labor Day. This is the kick off for our season and it attracts teams from all over New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. Each team plays four games from Friday night to Sunday. Each family must volunteer a minimum of 2 hours per player in the family. The families will be working either at the Tournament itself or in preparation for the tournament. Attendance at the tournament is MANDATORY.

All travel teams are also required to attend a Memorial Day Tournament (may be waived by Travel Board approval), which will be selected by the Travel Directors. High level teams have the option to attend a premier level Tournament for Memorial Day approved by the Travel Board.

It is expected that teams will attend at least 2 other tournaments throughout the year. The Travel Board will approve any and all tournaments that a team plans to attend.

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5. MSA Boosters Inc. Reimbursement to Teams

If a team meets the fundraising requirements (AFR), the MSA Boosters will reimburse the team a flat amount to be adjusted every year based on the results of the MSA August tournament. This amount is to be used to offset a portion of the cost of training and additional tournaments.

6. Coach/ Team Treasurer responsibility

At times a coach or team treasurer may lay out money in advance of reimbursement from the MSA Boosters or payment from the team. It should be noted that a coach should never feel responsible for covering the expenses for their team and if there are issues with collection, they should contact the Travel Directors immediately. MSA strongly recommends that teams separate the coach from the treasury functions for a team and therefore assign a separate individual to handle the team funds.

Games

Currently all teams play in either the Monmouth Ocean Soccer Association league (MOSA) or EDP leagues. All MOSA games are scheduled to be played on Sundays. The other leagues schedules vary based upon the number of games played and the number teams within their age division. These games can be played during the week or either Saturday or Sunday. Any league outside of MOSA or EDP requires MSA Board approval

Training & Practices

- All trainers must be pre-approved by the Travel Board, have a completed background check that meets the requirements as set out in Marlboro Township ordinance #2006-13, provide SS number or TIN for payment, provide a Certificate of Insurance, have a valid NJYS non-volunteer pass and utilize a predetermined schedule for the lights. Any sessions with the contracted trainer in addition to the allowance provided by the MSA Boosters must be agreed upon and paid by the team.
- The Travel Board will select one training company to train all teams U9 and under. Beginning at U10, a coach may petition the Travel Board to switch training companies. MSA strongly believes that having all of our children trained under the same established curriculum as approved by US Soccer is in the best interests of all of our children, especially at the earliest years. The first three years are the most formidable and the curriculum established by US Soccer is meant to ensure that our children have fun, love the game, learn the basic techniques and rules of play, develop strong teamwork and interpersonal skills and most importantly do it all in a safe environment. Further, by utilizing the services of one established training company, the Travel Board will be able to better evaluate the quality and consistency of the service being provided to our younger teams. That being said, there are circumstances after U10 that a team may wish to use a different training company.
- MSA strongly believes in our policy of utilizing one pre-approved company for the youngest years of participation in soccer to ensure that all children in our program are learning the same skills at the same age no matter what team they play on. We believe this is extremely critical to give players the finest tools to enable them to have the best opportunity to develop their level of play throughout their early soccer years. Each year the Travel Board will review the performance of all training companies that provide services paid for by our teams.
- The training company selected by the Travel Board must meet the following criteria:
 - Must have a minimum of \$1,000,000 in commercial general liability insurance
 - Must have working knowledge of the US Soccer training mandates
 - Must prepare work plans for every training session
 - Required to have back-up coaches for game day if the coach is unable to attend a game
 - Required to provide back-up trainers if the coach or trainer is unable to attend a training session
 - Must provide player evaluations at the end of the Fall & Spring season
 - Must have a survey at the end of every season to the parents
 - Required to provide training milestones per age group.
- Attendance is required at each and every practice/training. Should your child miss a practice due to illness, religious or academic commitments, the absence will be excused. Practices missed for unexcused reasons (i.e. other sports practices or birthday parties) may result in diminished play time. Play time may not be diminished below the minimum time set forth below without the prior approval of the Travel Directors and without prior notice to the player AND the player's parents.
- All teams will have a paid coach that will train the team and coach the games.

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- Protective eye wear may be required by each league and by NJ referees

Play Time

MSA has play time requirements for all games including friendlies, league games, tournaments, and cup games (e.g. MOSA Cup, State Cup, others). The play time requirement for MSA Travel is as follows:

- For all MOSA teams the rules are; 50% minimum play-time.
- For all EDP teams the rules are
 - 7v7 teams, mandatory 50% play-time regardless of level
 - 9v9 Teams, mandatory 40% play-time unless the team is at the highest level of EDP in which case 35% play time is allowed
 - 11v11 Teams, mandatory 40% play-time unless the team is at the highest level of EDP in which case 35% play time is allowed

These play time rules apply to all players who are physically and mentally present at scheduled team practices and training sessions. A player's play time may be reduced below the minimum for a game if there are attendance, discipline problems or injury. However, if a coach intends to reduce a child's play time below the minimum, the coach must obtain prior approval from a Travel Board and must notify the parents AND the player prior to the game.

Any Exceptions to the Play time rules will not be tolerated.

Disciplinary Actions – Red Cards

If a player receives a red card during a league sanctioned game, they will be subject to a suspension pending Travel Board investigation. The MSA will do its due diligence after the infraction to determine if a disciplinary hearing is appropriate. MSA will gather referee reports, eye-witness affidavits or other documents to assist with determining the proper course of action to take. Player cards will be held by the Travel Directors until the suspension is completed.

If a coach/trainer is ejected from a game, they will be suspended indefinitely, regardless of league policy or action, and will be required to appear before the MSA board to discuss the event that occurred. The MSA will do its due diligence prior to the hearing to gather referee reports, eyewitness affidavits or other documents to assist with determining the proper course of action to take.

1. All coaches who receive a red card, or two (2) yellow cards in the same match, are automatically suspended for a minimum of one (1) game, which may be increased at the discretion of a majority Travel board vote with Rec committee notification), and will be placed on lifetime probation. Any subsequent red card received, or upon any disciplinary violation, during the probationary period will result in the coach being disqualified for consideration to be reappointed as the head coach in the following season.
2. If a coach receives a second red card, or any disciplinary violation, he/she will be subject to immediate and permanent removal, at the discretion of the Travel Board.
3. The failure of a coach to immediately report the receipt of a red card to the Travel Board will result in their immediate and permanent removal as a coach.
4. All penalties imposed under this rule will be in conjunction with any sanctions imposed by any league.
5. All coaches have the right to appeal to the Travel board any sanctions imposed.
6. This suspension will apply to tournaments, state cup matches, etc. Coach's/trainer's cards will be held by the Travel Board until the suspension is completed.

Parents or family members ejected from matches or are involved in behavior that disrupts the rules of fair play or violated MSA code of conduct or is deemed inappropriate behavior by the MSA board, are subject to the same rule and policies as the players, coaches, and trainers. Parents ejected from matches will be suspended indefinitely from attending a practice or game (home or away) pending a hearing by the MSA Disciplinary Board to determine the course of action required and the length of the suspension. The minimum suspension is 1 game.

Parent Coach and Team Managers

Anyone interested in coaching or managing a travel team, may contact one of the Travel Directors for more information. All coaches and managers are required to obtain a NJYS State Certificate, take any rules course as required by the MSA, obtain a concussion certificate, and have a volunteer background check & required safe sport training, provided by Marlboro Recreation. Coaches and Managers will be selected by the Travel Directors and will continue to coach and manage at the discretion of the Travel Directors. The Travel Commitment policy applies to all coaches. Coaches are required to attend all games and practices.

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MSA has an expectation that our coaches will treat our children with respect and will prevent harassment and discrimination by coaching staff and athletes. We expect that they will conduct practices and games in a safe physical environment. We also expect that our coaches will be sensitive to the health and well-being of athletes under their care. We require that our coaches follow the governing rules of youth soccer (including NJYS and US Club Soccer). Should there be any concerns by the Travel Directors with regard to a coach's behavior, or if a coach has violated any rule; the coach will be held accountable. The discipline may range from a warning, to suspension, to removal. We fully expect that our coaches will have an open dialogue with the Travel Directors about their performance.

Parent Managers may be on the sidelines with the Paid Trainer Coach (PTC) under the following conditions:

- A) All coaching decisions in practice and games are the sole responsibility of the PTC.
- B) Parent managers can help on the sidelines to ensure the safety and well being of the players, clock management and other Non-Soccer related activities.
- C) Parent managers who wish to discuss soccer specific or other PTC related issues must do so privately outside of practice or game hours with the PTC.
- D) Parents & PTC's that have unresolved issues must bring them to the MSA Training Director for resolution.
- E) Only MSA in conjunction with the training company can remove a PTC from an assignment.
- F) None of the above excuse Parent Managers and PTC's from following the code of conduct which requires a decorum that is a positive example for our kids and reflects positively on the club and the town. Violations of which will result in immediate suspension from the role pending a disciplinary committee hearing.

FINAL COMMENTS Regarding Overall Commitment, Procedures for Appealing Decisions, Procedures for Addressing Concerns and Parent Code of Conduct Policy

Everything you do has either a positive or negative effect on all the players and their families. If you can't live up to this commitment, please do not accept your child's placement on a travel team.

Any additional questions should be addressed to the MSA Travel Directors.

Decisions made by the Travel Directors may be appealed to the entire Board of Directors of MSA. After that you have the right to appeal to the Rec Committee.

Please note that if you have any issues you should first discuss with your coach (after a 24 hour cooling off period). If you are not satisfied with the results of the conversation, you should contact the Travel Directors. If you are still not satisfied you should contact the Vice President of Travel or the President of MSA. If you are still not satisfied then you should contact the Rec Committee.

Parent Code of Conduct:

All parents are required to sign a code of conduct at time of registration. MSA takes this code of conduct very seriously and expects that all Parents will abide by the code.

Additionally, all coaches have the authority to immediately (but temporarily) remove a player from the game if the parent is coaching from the sidelines, yelling at a referee, acting inappropriately towards other parents or players, etc. We expect that parents will attend games to provide support and encouragement for the players.

During the course of the season, MSA intends to provide all parents greater education on parental involvement in youth sports and how their behavior impacts the children.