

## Field Marshal Instructions & Responsibilities

### FIELD MARSHAL POLICY

#### **Background/Purpose:**

Referee retention issues seem to have been an increasing issue over the past few years in many soccer associations. This referee shortage is caused by many reasons, but the most worrisome is the abuse from team officials and spectators towards the referees. The abuse can come in many forms but in particular, it is the verbal abuse, which is personal, provocative, and public in regards to the referee's on-field performance which has caused many referees to quit. It is a possibility they will make a mistake every game, but we have to encourage them to learn and improve rather than to insult/degrade their refereeing. This unacceptable behavior towards our officials must be addressed as a priority, particularly if we are to be a role model to our young athletes.

#### **Role:**

The Field Marshall Program is intended to assign one individual from each team to speak up on behalf of the referee among their fellow parents/spectators/peers. All teams participating in club must designate an individual at each game to act as a Field Marshall.

The individual acting as the Field Marshall (FM) must be named on the team's game sheet (could be on one of the tabs for ASST Coach). This may be handwritten on the games card each game.

#### **Objective :**

One of the primary objectives of Vilonia Soccer Club (VSC) is to promote good sportsmanship and fair play. Win, lose, or draw there is always an opportunity for a coach, player, or parent to display appropriate sportsmanship. Parents can demonstrate their commitment in a variety of ways such as by demonstrating good sportsmanship at games.

To ensure good sportsmanship, VSC has established the Field Marshal Program. The purpose of a Field Marshal is to assist referees in ensuring that players, coaches, and parents always maintain good conduct. The Field Marshal is there to assist the referee/s and to provide mediation concerning any off the field or surrounding vicinity issues. They are present to assist and support the referee with regard towards referee requests for outside assistance, but under no circumstances does a Field Marshal have the authority to disrupt a match or step onto the field. A referee is the SOLE authority on the field when a game is taking place; however, when there is a dispute and they REQUEST them, a Field Marshal may assist.

The referee(s) has/have the full authority in accordance with the Laws of the Game over all actions related to the game and its immediate vicinity of those on the sidelines and surrounding field zones, such as but not limited to, each team's technical area and the zone behind the goal. They can and will utilize a variety of measures of increasing

severity to encourage appropriate behavior by spectators and players. This can range anywhere from stopping play for sanctions, to disciplining and ejecting coaches, up to and including abandoning the game itself, if they deem it necessary. Unfortunately, it can be very difficult for a referee who is as young as 13 years old to exert his or her authority whether it is in the capacity of an Assistant Referee or as a Center Referee. While they understand they have the authority to take action, they typically do not feel comfortable doing so, especially towards an adult(s) or a crowd. For this reason, an adult Field Marshal can offer support for the referee(s) and assist in controlling any inappropriate behavior.

### **Duties and Responsibilities of the Field Marshal**

#### **1. Monitor the sidelines during games.**

Spectators and coaches must remain on their respective sides of the field -- and within their designated boxes (spectator and technical) that are painted on the ground by the hosting clubs -- during games and 3 feet back from the sideline to avoid interference with play, the Assistant Referee, and to prevent the obstruction of vision of the Referee with the play.

**2. Monitor verbal remarks and non-verbal gestures directed towards the referee(s), coaches, and players.** Heat-of-the-moment mild expressions of disapproval by spectators and coaches with the decisions/calls of the referee(s) are inevitable. However, continued disparaging or negative remarks directed toward the coach(es), referee(s) or players either verbal or through gestures will not be tolerated and must be stopped. The Field Marshal must intervene for the correction of any behavior that is harassing, disparaging, or intimidating towards the Coach(es), Referee(s), or to any players. Under VSC and ASA rules, the coach has the full responsibility for the behavior of the players and parents and will be sanctioned accordingly if their spectators are not acting in an appropriate manner. A Field Marshal will, if necessary, approach the offending spectator and privately ask them to attend to their conduct in question. For especially egregious or repeated inappropriate remarks or actions, it may be necessary to ask the offending individual to leave the field and go to the parking lot. If this is met with dissension, the coach can be notified of his spectator's actions and asked to assist. If the Field Marshal does not feel that the coach can/will assist in this and the Center Referee wants the behavior to stop, the CR must follow policy and direct the coach to take care of the parent's behavior, or the game could be abandoned by the referee crew. If a coach or part of the coaching team is the offending individual(s), the Field Marshal and Center Referee will take the same actions. Play should not be stopped for any of these interventions taken by the Field Marshal.

Field Marshals are responsible for monitoring the sidelines at our games to provide reminders about appropriate behavior from supporters so that the experience can be enjoyable for all attending.

## **Tasks**

### **Before the Game**

1. Arrive at game 20 minutes before start.
2. Meet with the home VSC coach, away coach, and center referee
3. Pick up your yellow vest.

### **DURING THE GAME**

1. Position yourself in the middle of the spectators' seating area, which is to be on the opposite side of the players bench (no spectators on the team player side of the field or behind goal nets). Diffuse potential problems before they arise by being visible and moving along the sideline.
2. The Field Marshal is expected to act on behalf of the club, team, and referee by reminding spectators to keep their comments to themselves and refrain from vocalizing their complaints during the game
3. Be attentive to the comments, actions, and behaviors of spectators watching the game and if any inappropriate comments, gestures and/or general unsporting behavior is directed at referees, players, or any other individual by spectators, go over to the spectator(s) and politely encourage them to behave appropriately, but please avoid getting into a confrontation. If someone is still hostile after being asked to calm down, the Center referee will stop the game and give a warning to the coach. Contact a VSC Board member on site, or electronically and let them know about incident. Please gather as much information as possible to forward to the VSC board for follow up, but do not put yourself in a dangerous position.
4. If a player gets hurt, the most important role of the field marshal is to remain neutral and be a calming influence with parents.
5. The FM are not expected to put themselves in a situation which may compromise their safety

### **AFTER THE GAME**

1. Give yellow vest back to Home VSC Coach.
2. Provide feedback to Center Referee and Home Coach

### **Responsibilities of Field Marshall:**

***To uphold VSC's Code of Conduct and serve as a role model to our young athletes.***