



IDAHO INFERNO PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

This document is intended to create a performance-friendly environment for our teams. By establishing parental/sideline 'norms' of behavior, we also minimize distractions, and improve communication for our teams, coaches and players. This effectively allows them to better focus on performance. Each of the 10 expectations are important, and to be respected. They are explained in greater detail below. Thank you for supporting your player, the team, the coaches and our club. Go Inferno!

1. **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT IS OUR PRIORITY OVER WINNING.**
2. **SUPPORT THE STANDARDS PLACED UPON THE PLAYERS.**
3. **HELP YOUR PLAYER TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND FIND SOLUTIONS.**
4. **LET THE COACHES COACH, AND THE PLAYERS PLAY.**
5. **PROVIDE THE BASIC SUPPORT ESSENTIAL TO SOCCER SUCCESS.**
6. **ACCEPT THE DECISIONS OF THE COACHING STAFF.**
7. **EMBRACE A 'TEAM FIRST' ATTITUDE.**
8. **AVOID NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT TEAM OR STAFF TO PLAYERS.**
9. **RESPECT THE COMPETITION.**
10. **RECOGNIZE THIS IS A VERY COMPETITIVE SPORT.**

I have read / understand these expectations as explained on the following pages, and agree to abide by them.

Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____

Team _____

EXPLANATION OF PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

1. **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT IS OUR PRIORITY OVER WINNING.** While no one enjoys losing, the priority of the Team Coaches is to develop players who can play at the next level – even more important than wins and losses. Wins and losses may reflect who was better on the day, but may not reveal progress over time. For example: if we beat someone 1-0 who we played ugly against, and who we should have played much better against, we shouldn't be feeling that great about ourselves because it's more important HOW we play. On the other hand, if we lose to a team that is better than that us, but we show heart, don't quit, or we try to play skillfully – then in my mind that's of value. That's something we can take into the future that will serve us well. There also will be times when how we are trying to play is long-term beneficial, but in the short-term may appear counterproductive. Such instances might include: (a) forbidding the players to kick the ball out of the back, even though it may be a quick fix; (b) rotating our players in different positions to help them form a more well-rounded education; (c) developing depth by playing our weaker players in times when the result is still on the line; (d) concentrating on skill development even at the risk of losing the game; (e) evaluating game performance more on how we play than the results. If we win lots, but develop few players for the next level (whether that be U11's moving to U12, U14's moving to HS soccer, or U18's moving to college), then we won't be doing our youth the service they deserve. Our number one job is to help them develop.

2. **SUPPORT THE STANDARDS PLACED UPON THE PLAYERS.** We want to be good at what we do. At the same time, our job as coaches is to help the players improve. This is only possible if they are pushed and we have standards. Standards must be set which are not too high (or the players become frustrated), but not too low (or the players become bored). Such standards include:

-Standards as a Person. Most of our kids are not going to grow up and turn pro. While we will love it when they do, what we want most is for them to take the positive lessons they learn from playing team sports (working hard, never quitting, putting team first, being respectful to people), and apply them in their life to help them become better people. This will mean that from time to time your coaching staff will have to 'toe a tough line' with the players, and may have to discipline them (I.e. not starting a game, not getting as much playing time, not being selected for

certain events or teams), so that certain behaviors are corrected. All of us as players, have been thru this, and sometimes these are hard and painful lessons. But they are tools all good coaches employ, to help shape our players' character and attitude. TOUGH LOVE is what it's called.

-**Skill Standards.** More than most sports, this game is all about skill. Look at Leo Messi, Diego Maradona, Luka Modric. Not the biggest of guys, or the fastest, but sharp. Skill comes through time spent by the player on the ball. While players will be taught certain skills at practice, skill is best developed outside of team practice. The more skilled our players are, the more time they will have to make decisions in the game. The more time they have to make decisions in the game, the better the decisions they'll make.

-**Juggle Standards.** Players will be given a number of juggles they must reach before a due date. Those who do will be rewarded. We believe this skill acquisition is critical to their learning to master the ball, while teaching the players how to train on their own. No player was born a great juggler. It takes discipline and hard work. There may be tears and frustration involved. But encourage them to keep with it. There is a huge satisfaction that comes with having accomplished something that seemed so difficult. As a good coach once told me, "Juggling doesn't mean you're going to be a good player, but every good player I know can juggle till the lights go out."

-**Training Standards.** To be good, we have to have a competitive, 'get after it' training mentality. Think about it: there are way more training sessions than there are games (3 practices per week, 1 game, for instance). Thus, the training sessions can be seen in general as a bigger factor in how players improve. Don't forget: we will play the way we practice. It cannot be accepted as truth to believe that 'oh we'll turn it on come game time' when practices are lacking. It doesn't work that way. It's like lifting weights at the gym: you're going to get out of it, what you put into it. We need a training environment that is fast, focused, serious, but fun.

-**Fitness Standards.** Soccer is a running game. To be good at soccer, you have to be a runner. You have to be fit. While fitness can be addressed at practices, fitness is something each player should take responsibility for to work on, on his or her own.

-Game Standards. This means things like the players getting proper rest and nutrition; being on time; having all of both uniforms; and taking a focused approach to warm-up. The players must learn to play at their personal high level day-in and day-out. For the players, nothing is more fun than game day, so being focused and trying to be good should be included in our definition of what 'fun' is.

3. **HELP YOUR PLAYER TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND FIND SOLUTIONS.** We want the players to step up and take ownership of their game. This is so important because, if they want to be a good player, it's no understatement to say, 'it's up to them'. They are going to be the number one reason why they are, or are not, a good player - much more so than any parent or coach. They have to be dedicated to their craft outside of practice. Teaching the players personal responsibility will include:

(a) **Help Us Teach Your Player Learn To Communicate With Their Coach If They Are Going To Miss Practice.** We want the kids to learn to speak up for themselves, and to properly and respectfully communicate, even if it is with their coaches (who are adults), and their teammates (who are kids). So we expect the players to communicate with the coach beforehand if they will be missing practice. There's nothing more frustrating for a coach to design a practice, only to find out at practice the players who need it the most, are not present. The entire practice may have to be changed, and this is a disservice to both your coach and your team.

(b) **Help Us Teach Your Player Learn To Communicate With Their Coach If They Are Having Problems Or Don't Understand Things.** This would include an injury, missing an upcoming event, questions about his/her role in the team, or playing time). After your player has discussed an issue with the team coach, if you are unsatisfied, at that time you may ask for a discussion with the coach, but in this event, the player be present at that meeting. Please do not approach your coach for a discussion right before practices (while he/she is trying to set up and mentally trying to get 'dialed in' to run the training session), or immediately after games (when emotions can be running high; wait 24 hours).

4. **LET THE COACHES COACH, AND THE PLAYERS PLAY.** Both must function with the freedom needed for success. Certain decisions are what we call 'coaching decisions', and belong solely belong to the coaches.

Those include (a) roster selections or the size of a roster, (b) positions, © formations, (d) guest play invites, (e) whether a player is a 'play up' or not, (f) substitutions, (g) game management, and (h) instructions during games or in practices. These are not matters that should be influenced by parents, but must be made by the Team Coaches to keep them free of subordination, impotence, or to in any way incapacitate them.

Please do not coach from the sidelines. All parents have the right, and opportunity, to discuss matters with their player after practices or games. But please do not coach from the sidelines. There are good reasons for this: (a) You may be giving advice contrary to that of the coaches. (b) Soccer is a player's game, meaning, the players must learn to make good decisions in the middle of the chaos; (c) We need the players listening for the coaches voice, not listening for voices coming from the sideline (a tell-tale sign is when a player is constantly looking over to the sideline to see what dad or mom thinks about plays). Their learning process involves making wrong decisions, taking personal responsibility for their decisions, and learning from mistakes. Do not make decisions for them; this is short-circuiting their learning process.

GAME TIME = PLAYERS TIME = PLAYERS MAKE THE DECISIONS.

5. **PROVIDE THE BASIC SUPPORT ESSENTIAL TO SOCCER SUCCESS.** As a parent, you can help so much by ensuring your player:

- attends practices consistently (the best ability is often availability);
- is picked up from practices and games in a timely manner;
- is at games 45 minutes before kickoff (unless coach says otherwise);
- is hydrated (does not show up dehydrated);
- eats well with adequate time to digest prior to training/games;
- is dressed warm for cold days (under Armor, sweats, hat, gloves, coat);
- has both sets of uniforms at every game.

6. **ACCEPT THE DECISIONS OF THE COACHING STAFF.** You may not like, or agree with, all of those decisions, but accepting coaching decisions is required in order for us to function as one. Otherwise we will have too many cooks in the kitchen. That being said, all parents have the right to call or talk with their coaches to discuss matters, as long as communications are respectful and not overbearing, and as long as (see above) the player has done so first. Again, any meeting must involve player and parent.

7. **EMBRACE A 'TEAM FIRST' ATTITUDE.** T.E.A.M. stands for 'Together Each Achieves More'. Without this, it's very hard for players to pull together in difficult times. A good team is one where all oars are rowing in the same direction; where the whole, turns out to be greater than the sum of it's parts ($1+1+1=4$). A 'Team First' attitude includes understanding:

(a) your player may be asked to play in a position where they are asked to or needed; (b) accepting that sometimes the coach may not play everyone equally; (c) avoiding behavior which is distracting to team performance; (d) helping out when and where you can; (e) sticking with the group in tough times rather than turning on them or acting selfishly; (f) not putting self-interests above the interests of the team.

8. **AVOID NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT TEAM OR STAFF TO PLAYERS.** Such talk will affect the players' attitudes, interactions, or performances, and is counter-productive to fostering a positive environment. As we do with the players, we are looking to develop people who find solutions, are positive, who make others around them better, and who care about the welfare of others.

9. **RESPECT THE COMPETITION.** We need competition in order to improve. Much like the martial artist bows to his opponent before the battle, out of respect, we must also be respectful to our opponents. This includes refraining from negative comments directed at the competition from the sidelines or after games. And it without question means winning with humility, and losing with grace.

10. **RECOGNIZE THIS IS A VERY COMPETITIVE SPORT.** As much as we love and care about our people, this is competitive soccer. Players must compete for their spot on the team, must compete for time on the field. While we understand that players don't develop sitting on the bench, and that playing on the team is quite the commitment, there will be times when some players don't play as much as others. The more the players learn to consistently compete, the better both they, and the team, will be.