



# St. Louis Legends Parent Handbook

Player-first expectations for families, guests, and game day conduct

## Purpose

St. Louis Legends Soccer Club exists to develop confident, creative, and independent soccer players. Our players learn best when the game belongs to them. They need space to solve problems, make decisions, take risks, make mistakes, and grow without constant correction or judgment from the sideline.

This handbook explains the expectations for parents and families during training, games, tournaments, and club events. These expectations are in place to protect the players, support the coaches, respect referees, and create a safe learning environment for every child.

## The Legends Philosophy

The Legends philosophy is built around player development first. Winning games is valuable, but the long-term goal is to develop players who are brave, skillful, creative, and confident with the ball. We want players who are willing to take risks, solve problems, and express themselves in the game.

Legends players are taught to value individual skill, creativity, attitude, and effort. The club believes that young players need repeated opportunities to try moves, beat defenders, make decisions, and learn from mistakes. This is why parents must allow the game to be the player's learning environment.

## 1v1 Mastery as a Core Development Focus

1v1 mastery is a core part of the Legends player development model. Players must become comfortable attacking and defending in individual situations before they can consistently succeed in larger team concepts.

In attack, 1v1 mastery helps players:

- Beat defenders with confidence.
- Use fakes, changes of speed, and changes of direction.
- Protect the ball under pressure.
- Create space for themselves and teammates.
- Become brave enough to try creative solutions.

In defending, 1v1 mastery helps players:

- Compete with focus and courage.
- Learn body positioning and timing.
- Delay attackers and win the ball responsibly.
- Understand effort, recovery, and responsibility.

Parents should understand that mistakes in 1v1 moments are part of the process. A player who tries to beat a defender and loses the ball is still learning. A player who takes risks is building the confidence needed for long-term growth. The

club does not want players afraid to make mistakes because of adult reactions from the sideline.

The parent role is to support the process, not judge each attempt. Encourage bravery, effort, creativity, and resilience. Those qualities are central to the Legends philosophy.

## Parent Role

Parents are a major part of a player's soccer experience. Your support matters. The most helpful parent role is to encourage effort, model respect, and allow the player to experience the game independently.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Cheer positively for effort, hustle, bravery, and teamwork.
- Support all Legends players, not only their own child.
- Allow coaches to coach.
- Allow referees to officiate.
- Allow players to make their own decisions on the field.
- Help create a calm, safe, and respectful game environment.

## Sideline Expectations

### No Sideline Coaching

St. Louis Legends has a zero-tolerance policy for sideline coaching.

Parents may not instruct players during games. This includes telling players where to run, when to pass, when to shoot, what move to use, where to stand, or what decision to make. Even when well-intended, sideline coaching distracts players, creates confusion, and prevents them from learning to read the game on their own.

Players need the freedom to make decisions independently. Mistakes are part of development. A child cannot fully learn the game if they are constantly reacting to adult voices from the sideline.

### No Intimidating, Arguing With, or Talking to Referees

St. Louis Legends has a zero-tolerance policy for intimidating, arguing with, or talking to referees.

Parents may not approach referees before, during, or after games. Parents may not yell at referees, question calls, make sarcastic comments, gesture toward officials, or attempt to influence the game through referee interaction.

Referees are part of youth soccer. Many are young, learning, or developing just like the players. Our club will model respect for officials at all times.

### No Approaching Opposing Players

St. Louis Legends has a zero-tolerance policy for approaching, confronting, intimidating, or speaking negatively to players from opposing teams.

Parents may not address opposing players during or after the game for any reason related to play, behavior, contact, fouls, or conflict. If there is a concern, it must be handled through the coach.

Adults should never put another child in an uncomfortable or intimidating position. Player safety and emotional well-being come first.

## The 24-Hour Coach Communication Policy

Parents must wait 24 hours before approaching a coach about concerns related to playing time, positions, game decisions, roster decisions, conflict, or emotional reactions from a game.

This policy gives everyone time to calm down, reflect, and communicate more productively. Conversations immediately after games are rarely helpful, especially when emotions are high.

After 24 hours, parents may contact the coach respectfully to request a conversation. Coaches will not discuss these topics immediately after a match.

Appropriate topics for a scheduled conversation include:

- What the player can work on.
- How the player is progressing.
- How the parent can support development at home.
- Any concern involving safety, well-being, or communication.

Inappropriate topics include:

- Criticizing another player.
- Demanding playing time.
- Comparing one child to another.
- Arguing about coaching decisions.
- Replaying every moment of a game.

## Consequences for Sideline Behavior

Parent behavior directly affects the team environment and can directly impact the child's playing time.

If a parent violates the sideline expectations, the club may take one or more of the following actions:

- Verbal warning from the coach or club leadership.
- Removal of the parent from the sideline or event.
- Requirement that the parent observe games from a designated area away from the team.
- Reduced playing time for the player until the issue is resolved.
- Player being held out of games when parent behavior creates a distraction or unsafe environment.
- Meeting with club leadership before the player returns to full participation.
- Removal from the club in repeated or severe situations.

These consequences are not intended to punish children. They are intended to protect the learning environment, the safety of all players, and the integrity of the team. When sideline behavior disrupts the player's ability to learn, the coach's ability to coach, or the team's ability to play safely, the club must respond.

## Why These Rules Matter

The game is the player's classroom. During a match, players are learning how to scan the field, make decisions, recover from mistakes, solve problems, manage emotions, and compete.

When adults coach from the sideline, criticize decisions, yell at referees, or confront other players, the child's attention shifts away from the game and toward adult judgment. That creates anxiety, fear of mistakes, and confusion.

Our goal is for players to learn on their own. We want them to become brave, creative, independent decision-makers. That can only happen when the adults create a safe environment and allow the players to play.

## The Car Ride Home

The car ride home is one of the most important moments in a young player's development.

After games, parents are encouraged to keep the conversation simple and supportive. The most powerful thing a child can hear is:

**"I'm so proud of you."**

Parents should avoid criticism, corrections, tactical feedback, negative comments about performance, complaints about referees, comments about teammates, or frustration about playing time during the ride home.

Even when parents believe they are helping, immediate criticism after a game can make a child feel judged instead of supported. The car ride home should be a safe place where the child feels loved regardless of the result.

If a player wants to talk about the game, parents can ask open and supportive questions:

- "Did you have fun?"
- "What was something you felt proud of?"
- "What was something brave you tried?"
- "What did you learn today?"

If the player does not want to talk, that is okay. Let the game breathe. Let the child be a child.

## Game Day Parent Checklist

Before and during each game, parents should remember:

- I will cheer positively.
- I will not coach from the sideline.
- I will not address referees.
- I will not approach opposing players.
- I will respect the 24-hour coach communication policy.
- I will let my child make decisions and learn from the game.
- I will make the car ride home supportive, not critical.

## Parent Agreement

By participating with St. Louis Legends Soccer Club, parents and guardians agree to follow these expectations and support the club's player-first learning environment.

The club's goal is simple: protect the game, protect the players, and help every child grow with confidence, creativity, and joy.