

Special Olympics Massachusetts Family Member Code of Conduct

Preamble:

The essential elements of character building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects "the six pillars of character."

As a SOMA Family member I pledge that:

- I will not force my athlete to participate in sports.
- I will remember that athletes participate to have fun and that the game is for them, not the family members.
- I will see to it that my athlete's medical form is up-to-date complete and on file.
- I will learn the rules of the game and the SOMA policies.
- I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my athlete and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy and by demonstrating positive support for all athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice, or competition.
- I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of un-sportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, or family member such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language or gestures.
- I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well being of the athletes.
- I will teach my athlete to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I will demand that my athlete treat other athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
- I will teach my athlete that doing one's best is more important than winning so that my athlete will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
- I will praise my athlete for competing fairly and trying hard, and I will make my athlete feel like a winner every time.
- I will never ridicule or yell at my athlete or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition.
- I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my athlete over winning. I will also de-emphasize games and competition in lower age groups.
- I will promote the emotional and physical well being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire that I may have for my athlete to win.
- I will respect the officials and their authority during games and competitions and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches during competitions. Instead, I will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
- I will demand a sports environment for my athlete that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all sports events and competitions.
- I will refrain from coaching my athlete or other athletes during competitions and practices.

As a SOMA Family Member I also understand that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I may be subject to disciplinary action that could include, but not be limited to the following:

- Verbal warning by officials, coaches, and/or SOMA personnel,
- Game suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file in the Area and SOMA state office,
- Written warning,
- Game forfeit through official or coach, and/or
- Season suspension.