

# Player, Coach, and Team Recruitment Policy



Maryland State Youth Soccer  
Association

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[msysa.org](http://msysa.org)

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## Introduction

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It is the goal of the Maryland State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA) to ensure a level field of competition between its affiliates by pursuing the fundamental principles and general procedures of sportsmanship, fairness, and community. This policy is not meant to restrict the development of the players. MSYSA encourages all members to work together and to actively promote players to higher levels of play that are appropriate for the players based upon their technical capabilities and social needs.

## Player Recruitment

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The recruitment of carded, travel player(s) actively playing for another MSYSA-affiliated organization is prohibited, except as specifically provided in this policy. A carded, travel player is actively playing for a team if the player appears on the official team roster certified by an authorized representative of MSYSA for the current Seasonal Year (August 1–July 31). This Policy does not apply to non-carded, recreational players or to players who do not appear on an official team roster certified by an authorized representative of MSYSA for the current Seasonal Year.

Contact with the player for the purposes of recruitment is restricted during the soccer year except during the Open Recruitment period. The Open Recruitment period will run from May 15th through June 30th. Outside of the Open Recruitment period, contact with a prospective player is only allowed with the permission of the player's current club. A description on how to contact players outside of the Open Recruitment period is listed below. It shall be the responsibility of club officials to coordinate with each other prior to any contact.

Any player/player guardian is able at any time to initiate contact with another coach, team, or club. The contacted club can then freely communicate with the player provided the original communication was player/guardian initiated.

Communication originating or initiated by a new coach or club can only occur during the Open Recruitment period of May 15th through June 30th.

Contact is defined as any verbal, written, electronic, and/or direct communication between a prospective player or the player's parents or legal guardian(s) and an official club representative or a parent of the club, to which the prospective player is not a member. Any contact relating to the prospective player joining a new club shall be covered by this policy.

The Club official who can authorize contact is defined as a person of authority within the Club such as the Club's Board of Director, Executive Director, Technical Director, Director of Coaching, etc. It is not the team officials (coach, assistant coach, manager) of the player's team.

Adults registered with MSYSA (administrator, coach, trainer or booster) shall NOT recruit players actively playing for another team for participation in their program.

This rule does not prohibit the communication or publication of open tryouts to the general public, or the conduct of open tryouts, or subsequent communication with uncommitted players who attended an open tryout. It also does not prevent a player from seeking out additional opportunities throughout the year (i.e., guest playing, club transfers, etc.) if the player legitimately initiated the contact.

A player's arrival at a publicly announced tryout, solely of their own volition and choice, is considered player-initiated communication, even if not during the stated open period.

Recruitment includes, but may not be limited to, the following activity:

- Communicating with a player or parent (directly or indirectly) on the subject of that player’s participation in a club or a team.
- Inducing, soliciting, or otherwise using current players, or their parents, to persuade players from another team to transfer.
- Providing incentives to committed players such as reductions in fees, trips, uniforms, and other equipment.
- Using a position of authority to persuade a player to transfer from one team to another. This shall include adults involved with MSYSA programs such as State and District ODP, State Cup, Presidents Cup; MSYSA-carded adults involved with clinics and soccer camps; and MSYSA-carded adults involved with private or public Middle or High School programs or other programs such as indoor soccer or Futsal.

If a player does leave their existing team, the player must honor the agreement reached with the previous Team Official(s) regarding payment of fees, return of uniforms and/or other equipment, etc. in accordance with the MSYSA Nonpayment of Club/Team Financial Obligations Policy. Failure to do so may prevent the player from joining another team.

## How to Contact a Prospective Player

It is recommended that all communications be in writing to avoid any misunderstandings. The appropriate Procedure for Contacting a player who is committed to another Club is as follows:

- Player is scouted and identified.
- Permission to contact the prospective player must be granted by the player’s Club official.
- For Club contact, visit MSYSA.org and locate the Club Contact page.
- Find the club of the prospective player and send an email to the club identifying the player, age group, and gender and requesting permission to contact the player.
- Save all related written correspondences and emails.
- Once permission is given, contact may be made.
- If permission is denied, contact may NOT be made until the Open Recruitment period.
- If the Club of the prospective player does not respond to the request within five (5) business days, contact MSYSA for assistance. MSYSA will attempt to contact the Club of the prospective player.
- With or without MSYSA’s assistance, if you still cannot contact the prospective player’s club, then contact may NOT be made until the Open Recruitment period.
- If an offer to join the new club will be made, then ask the player to continue with their current club until the end of the season or at a point in time that is mutually agreeable between the two clubs. Having a detailed written and signed contract between the player’s parents/guardians and the Club will help identify the obligations of both parties and may avoid misunderstandings. A signed contract will make it easier to deal with disputes. While MSYSA may aid in the arbitration between parties, it is not a debt collection organization.

## Special Rules Applicable to Coaches

1. All MSYSA rules pertaining to recruiting shall be strictly observed by coach, manager, and all team representatives. Compliance with these rules shall be the responsibility of the coach and team officials.
2. Individual training – players and coaches are not restricted from contracting individual player training, however any attempt to solicit player participation in a different club as a result of the contract session will be construed as a violation.

3. Any attempt to contact a player or parent with the intent to recruit must begin with an inquiry from club official to club official (not coach) as to the player's current commitment.
4. Any direct contact with a player for the purpose of guest playing (tournament, league, training, or winter activities) must begin with an inquiry from club official to club official (not coach) as to the player's availability status.
5. Continuing any contact with a player or parent after learning that the player is actively playing for another team is prohibited.
6. At all times when discussing the advantages of their Club, program or organization, the coach has an obligation to be truthful, forthright, and to refrain from making derogatory remarks regarding other coaches, teams, and organizations.
7. No coach may make a statement, at any time, to a prospective athlete which cannot be verified as true or promise any kind of compensation or monetary or material inducement for play.
8. No MSYSA-certified adult may use a position of authority or trust to persuade a minor (player) to transfer from one club to another while minor is under their care. This shall include MSYSA-certified adults who are also involved with MSYSA ODP, clinics and soccer camps, and private or public schools.

## Coach Recruitment

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Recruitment of carded, travel coaches actively working for another MSYSA-affiliated organization is prohibited, except as specifically provided in this rule. A carded, travel coach is actively coaching if the coach appears on an official team roster certified by an authorized representative of MSYSA for the current Soccer Year (August 1 – July 31) OR has signed a contract for the upcoming seasonal soccer year. This Policy does not apply to non-carded, recreational coaches or to coaches who do not appear on an official team roster certified by an authorized representative of MSYSA for the current Seasonal Year.

Contact with a coach for the purposes of recruitment is restricted during the soccer year except during the Open Recruitment period. The Open Recruitment period will run from May 15th through June 30th. Outside of the Open Recruitment period, contact with a prospective coach is only allowed with the permission of the coach's current club. A Club official who can authorize contact is defined as a person of authority within the Club such as the Club's Board of Director, Executive Director, Technical Director, Director of Coaching, etc. A description on how to contact coaches outside of the Open Recruitment period is listed below. It is the responsibility of club officials to coordinate with each other prior to any contact with coaches.

This rule does not prohibit the freedom of movement from club to club and does not prohibit the communication or publication of job announcements. However, it does require that club leadership verify the status of an individual coach before approaching and or continuing to further discuss future employment opportunities with said individual. Verification is done from club official to club official and requires a written request/reply before actual conversations may take place or continue to take place with an individual coach.

The expectation for a coach is to fulfill their contractual obligation with their Club before leaving the Club. Additionally, special care should be given to not violate any portion of this Player, Coach, and Team Recruitment Policy in the event that some or all players choose to follow their coach from one Club to another. The best time to move from one Club to another is at the end of the seasonal soccer year.

In situations where a coach moves from one club to another separate and distinct club/team during the seasonal year, the coach may not coach any rostered players from teams of the former club he/she was identified as a primary or assistant coach (excluding the coach's son or daughter) during that seasonal year.

This rule does not apply under the following:

1. The coach's club dissolves.
2. The appropriate prior club representative agrees in writing to the coach's move to a different club.

Recruitment includes the following activity:

- Communicating with a coach or parent (directly or indirectly) on the subject of that coach's participation in a club.
- Inducing, soliciting, or otherwise using current coaches, players, or their parents, to persuade coaches from another team to transfer.
- Providing incentives to committed coaches.

## How to Contact a Prospective Coach

The appropriate procedure for contacting a coach who is committed to another Club is as follows:

- Visit MSYSA.org and locate the Club Contact page.
- Locate the club of the prospective coach and send an email to a club official, defined as a person of authority within the Club such as the Club's Board of Director, Executive Director, Technical Director, Director of Coaching, etc., identifying the coach and requesting permission to contact the coach. Save this and all related written correspondences and emails.
- Once permission is given, contact may be made.
- If permission is denied, contact should NOT be made until the Open Recruitment period.
- If the Club of the prospective coach does not respond to the request within five (5) business days, contact MSYSA for assistance. MSYSA will attempt to contact the Club of the prospective coach.
- With or without MSYSA's assistance, if you still cannot contact the prospective coach's club, then contact may NOT be made until the Open Recruitment period.
- If an offer to join the new club will be made, ask the coach to fulfill all contractual obligations and to continue with their current club until the end of the season or at a point in time that is mutually agreeable between the two clubs. Having a written and signed contract between the coach and Club will help with identifying the obligations of both parties and may prevent misunderstandings.

## Team Recruitment

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MSYSA encourages all teams to remain with their respective Clubs until the completion of the seasonal soccer year. Recruitment of team(s) actively playing for another MSYSA affiliated organization is prohibited, except as specifically provided in this policy. A team is actively playing for another club if the team has an official team roster certified by an authorized representative of MSYSA for the current seasonal soccer year (August 1 – July 31). As with any team movement, the approval of both clubs must consider any monies owed to or agreements made with current club.

## Penalties

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- Coach or club official(s) who violate the rules may be deemed ineligible to participate in MSYSA sanctioned leagues, MSYSA sanctioned tournaments, the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series (State, East Region, and National), and the US Youth Soccer Presidents Cup (State, East Region, and National).
- Coaches/Club officials and the Club in violation of this policy may be added to the MSYSA website page listing all violators.
- The matter may also be reported to the United States Soccer Federation and all of its affiliates.

- If a Club/team official is found to have violated this policy, a financial penalty will be imposed on the Club.
- Failure to pay the financial penalty will result in the Club being designated as being in Bad Standing. Organizations placed in bad standing will be suspended from all MSYSA activities and programs, including their right to vote at the MSYSA Annual General Meeting. Players registered with that Club cannot participate in team practices, MSYSA sanctioned league play, MSYSA sanctioned tournaments, State Cup, Presidents Cup, or ODP. Insurance coverage is also suspended.
- The financial penalty is comprised of two parts – the investigator fee and the violation fine. Please visit MSYSA.org to view these fees.
- Repeat Offense Tracking Period - the period for tracking repeat offenses is on a graduated scale. The tracking period will start on the date the MSYSA Recruitment Committee made its latest decision.
  - For the first offense, any future offenses within a 3-year period will be treated as a repeat offense.
  - On a second offense, the offense tracking period will extend to 5 years from the time of the second offense decision.
  - For third and subsequent offenses, the offense tracking period will be 5 years and the offending Club official(s) will be suspended from all youth soccer activities for 1 calendar year.
  - At the end of the Repeat offense tracking period, if there have been no recruitment violations, then the Repeat offense tracking period will be reset. Violations after this point will be treated as first offense violations and will follow the graduated fines and Repeat offense tracking periods outlined above.

## Process

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The process is designed to have a negligible impact on existing MSYSA personnel or committees.

1. The MSYSA club initiating the complaint must submit a fee to MSYSA.
2. Submit a written allegation to MSYSA Executive Director.
3. The complaint will be forwarded to the MSYSA Recruitment Committee.
4. The MSYSA Recruitment Committee will assign a special investigator within 3 days.
5. The MSYSA Office will notify both Clubs that an investigation is starting and the identity of the special investigator.
6. Both Clubs must contact the special investigator within 7 calendar days. All affiliates shall cooperate with the review by making individuals, documents, and communications available in a timely fashion.
7. The special investigator shall review all allegations and prepare a written report for the MSYSA Recruitment Committee within 15 days of completion of review.
8. After receiving the special investigator's report, the MSYSA Recruitment Committee will make the final decision on the submitted complaint, to include additional sanctions for repeat offenders, and provide their decision to the MSYSA Board of Directors and both clubs.
9. If the accused affiliate club is determined to have violated the policy,
  - a. Club will receive a fine from MSYSA in addition to any monies owed to the originating club and investigator fees.
  - b. The MSYSA affiliate club that initiated the complaint will have their submission feerefunded.
  - c. If the accused affiliate club wishes to appeal the decision to the MSYSA Recruitment Committee, then the accused affiliate club must submit a written appeal to the MSYSA Office within 48 hours from the time of the decision notification by MSYSA. The accused affiliate club must also submit a non-refundable appeals fee with the written appeals request.
  - d. A notice will be placed on the MSYSA website to track offenders.
10. If the accused affiliate club is determined to NOT have violated the policy, then MSYSA will retain the submission fee. This fee will go towards the time and expenses of the MSYSA investigator.