



Sherrills Ford Optimist Club

Parent & Spectator Code of Conduct

(Policy Statement)

The Sherrills Ford Optimist Club is committed to providing a safe, structured, and positive environment for all participants. To ensure the integrity of our programs, all parents, guardians, and spectators are required to adhere to the following standards of conduct.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action as outlined below.

1. Acknowledgment and Agreement

Participation in Sherrills Ford Optimist programs constitutes acknowledgment and acceptance of this Code of Conduct. All parents and spectators are expected to comply fully with these standards.

2. Standard of Conduct

All parents, coaches and spectators shall:

- Conduct themselves in a respectful and appropriate manner at all times.
 - Comply with the direction of coaches, officials, and league directors.
 - Refrain from any behavior that disrupts games, practices, or league operations.
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3. Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited:

- Verbal abuse, harassment, or intimidation of players, coaches, officials, directors, or spectators.
 - Confrontational or aggressive behavior at any time during league activities.
 - Public criticism or disputes during or immediately following games.
 - Any action that interferes with the safe and orderly operation of the facility or event.
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4. Mandatory 24-Hour Rule

- A **mandatory 24-hour waiting period** is required before a parent, coach or spectator may raise any concern related to games or practices.
- This rule applies to **all interactions with coaches, directors, officials, score keepers and league leadership.**
- Under no circumstances shall a parent, coach or spectator attempt to address concerns:

- Immediately after a game
 - During active gameplay
 - In a heated or emotional state
 - After the 24-hour period, communication must be initiated respectfully and through appropriate channels.
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5. Officials (Referees/Umpires) – Protected Role

- Game officials are independent of Sherrills Ford Optimist and must be treated with respect at all times.
 - Parents, coaches and spectators are strictly prohibited from approaching, confronting, or communicating with officials before, during, or after games.
 - The Sherrills Ford Optimist Club will not provide, release, or distribute referee or official contact information to parents, coaches or spectators under any circumstances.
 - Any attempt to obtain or use such information to contact, question, or harass an official is a violation of this policy and will result in immediate disciplinary action.
 - All concerns regarding officiating must be directed to league leadership in accordance with the 24-hour rule.
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6. Coaches – Boundaries of Interaction

- Parents shall not approach coaches during or immediately after games or practices to discuss concerns or disputes.
 - Coaches must be allowed to complete team responsibilities without interruption.
 - Sideline coaching or interference with coaching decisions is prohibited.
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7. Directors & League Leadership

- Directors are responsible for overseeing games, participants, and overall facility operations.
 - **Parents are prohibited from approaching, confronting, or engaging directors, league leadership, or club leadership with complaints or disputes during or immediately following games.** All interactions must follow the 24-hour rule.
 - Such interruptions **compromise the director's ability to supervise ongoing activities and maintain a safe environment.**
 - Harassment, repeated confrontation, or disruptive behavior toward directors will not be tolerated.
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8. Communication Limitations

Appropriate communication (after 24 hours) includes:

- Player development
- Player well-being
- Constructive feedback regarding your child
- Playing time and only if a sport has required, mandatory playing time rules

The following topics are not subject to dispute:

- Playing time (with the exception of verifying playing time in sports that have mandatory amounts of playing time)
 - Coaching strategy
 - Judgment calls made by officials
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9. Enforcement & Disciplinary Action

Violations of this Code of Conduct may result in, but are not limited to:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Immediate removal from a game or facility
- Suspension from league events
- Permanent ban from attendance
- Removal of a participant from the program (in severe or repeated cases)

The league reserves the exclusive right to determine appropriate disciplinary action based on the severity of the violation.

10. Authority & Right to Enforce

Sherrills Ford Optimist Club reserves the sole and absolute right to interpret, enforce, and apply this Code of Conduct. All decisions made by club or league leadership, including directors and the Athletic Director, are final.

The league further reserves the right to take any action deemed necessary to protect the safety, integrity, and reputation of its participants, volunteers, and programs.

11. Assumption of Risk & Release of Liability

By participating in or attending league activities, all parents, guardians, and spectators acknowledge and accept that Sherrills Ford Optimist Club, its directors, coaches, volunteers, and representatives shall not be held liable for disputes arising from enforcement of this policy.

All participants agree to release and hold harmless the organization and its leadership from claims related to disciplinary decisions made in good faith.

12. Social Media, Defamation & Public Conduct

- Parents and spectators are prohibited from posting, sharing, or distributing false, misleading, or defamatory statements regarding the league, its participants, coaches, officials, directors, or volunteers.
 - Any public or social media conduct that damages the reputation of the organization or its members may result in disciplinary action under this policy.
 - The league reserves the right to pursue further action, including legal remedies, in cases involving defamation, harassment, or reputational harm.
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14. Removal & Trespass Enforcement

Sherrills Ford Optimist Club reserves the right to remove any individual from league facilities or events for violation of this policy. League facilities are any facilities in use by Sherrills Ford Optimist, including facilities owned by the Club or rented for use by the Club. Repeated violations or refusal to comply may result in suspension or permanent ban from league property. Continued presence after removal will be considered trespassing and may be referred to local law enforcement authorities.

15. Formal Complaint Procedure

To ensure all concerns are addressed in a fair, structured, and professional manner, the following process must be followed:

Step 1: Initial Communication with Coach

- All concerns or complaints must first be directed to the team's coach.
- Communication must occur after the mandatory 24-hour waiting period.
- Upon receiving a complaint, the coach will be allowed up to 48 hours to respond.
- Parents must allow this timeframe for the coach to review the concern and respond appropriately.

Step 2: Escalation to Director

- If the concern cannot be resolved by the coach, the matter may be escalated to the appropriate sport director.
- Complaints must be submitted in a respectful manner and should clearly outline the concern.

Step 3: Director Review & Response Timeline

- Upon receiving a complaint, the director will be allowed up to 48 hours to respond.
- This timeframe is necessary to:

- Conduct a proper review of the situation
- Gather relevant information
- Communicate with involved parties
- Consult with the sports committee if needed
- The director will provide a response or direction once the review is complete.

Step 4: Communication Expectations

- Parents and coaches must allow the full 48-hour response period before initiating additional contact at each step of this process.
- Repeated messages, emails, or attempts to contact a coach or director within this timeframe are not permitted.

Step 5: Harassment & Disruptive Conduct

- Repeated contact or aggressive follow-up during or after the review period will be considered harassment.
- Failure to respect this process or timeline may result in:
 - Termination of the complaint review
 - Immediate removal from league events or facilities
 - Further disciplinary action as outlined in this policy

Step 6: Athletic Director Contact

- The Athletic Director may be contacted only after Steps 1 and 2 have been completed and appropriate time has been allowed for review at each level.
- Contacting the Athletic Director prematurely or bypassing the established process is not permitted.
- All parties must still allow appropriate time for investigation and response before escalating or making repeated contact.