



USA Ultimate

Spirit of Coaching

Background:

The role of the coach at all levels of Ultimate is unique in a sport that places on-field player authority above non-player influence. As non-players the coach's authority must not extend to the on-field officiating process. Coaches may be faced with situations where they are able to correct the self-officiating process and ensure the correct outcome to a given play. In this situation, coaches must not interfere in the officiating process, in order to ensure that players learn and take responsibility for officiating. Coach interference in the decision making process, even in the most egregious violations, will indicate to players that the coach and not the players have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the inherent fairness of the game. Teaching players the rules and how to implement them should be done at practices or off of the field. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that the players understand their own responsibilities as players and teach players how to handle those responsibilities.

Guidelines:

- Coaches should introduce themselves to the other coaches prior to a game and discuss concerns. This could potentially include the level of play, the level of intensity (e.g. spiking and rushing the field), and possible modifications to the captain's clause (e.g. prohibiting zone for new teams or footblocking).

- Because the potential for misperception is high, spiking is prohibited at the youth level unless otherwise agreed upon by the coaches or captains. Spiking in a disrespectful manner is never ok at any level.
- Coaches will not make calls from the sideline nor offer their opinion on a play. Coaches should encourage players to come to a resolution on their own, and if asked during a dispute coaches may offer rules clarifications. After a dispute a coach may talk to his or her own player about the dispute and offer opinions.
- Youth coaches will make an effort to educate parents about Spirit of the Game and work to create a sideline atmosphere that respects Spirit of the Game.
- Coaches will teach and give players opportunities to practice knowledge of the rules of Ultimate.
- Coaches will always exhibit respect for opposing players.
- Coaches will always exhibit respect for other coaches.
- Coaches will always exhibit respect for observer
- Coaches will model Spirit of the Game at all times

Summary:

The coach's goal in terms of Spirit of the Game is to create an *environment* where players are responsible for upholding the rules and ensuring that the outcomes of plays and games are fair.