

# To Be Shared with Coaches and Parents

## " The Importance of the Pause " By Ken Pope

No one is immune to human emotion: parents, players, fans and even referees. Even good people get caught up in the moment. We understand this, but who is responsible to help control these emotions and prevent them from taking over? If you believe it's a personal responsibility - you're correct, but not for the reason you may think.

The offender has a personal responsibility to not act out. But you also have a personal responsibility to step forward and stop it. It's your responsibility to remind your friends, family, coach, manager and acquaintances there are children around and the importance of calming down. It's your responsibility to tell them to " **Pause** ".

Coaches have a difficult job. Believe it or not they are held responsible for the parents' actions. By keeping the touchline quiet and calm, they can then focus their time and energy on the kids instead of the parents. Likewise, coaches need to remember players follow their lead. Your responsibility first and foremost is to the development of the children. The development of their character is as, if not more, important than their skill development. So please don't be one of those coaches who screams at the referee or players.

Likewise, don't be one of those coaches, parents, players or fans who just makes subtle comments to make themselves feel better. Unfortunately, regardless of which side of the touchline you sit, we all hear it all too often. That's the "Are you kidding me"? "Really, Really?" , "Are you serious?" , "What was that?" , "Call it both ways!" comments which tend to build upon the emotion and frustration of the referees. Particularly when you are dealing with youth referees. There simply is no excuse for this behavior. It doesn't accomplish anything positive and just fuels the fire for everyone else.

We need to remember mob mentality can be contagious so we need to stop it before it grows. While what happened to John Bieniewicz may be an extreme example; (referee who was killed in 2014) unfortunately, the escalation of emotions is all too common. Most of us have been there and heard the game where the parents and coaches are constantly yelling at the referees and it draws the attention of anyone passing by as we hear the volume grow. Words have consequences and as a result of this type of continued behavior, we have had several referees decide they have had enough.

As a parent of a female youth referee who was struck by a fan, I can attest that things have gone too far. We are asking for your help ~ parents, players, coaches, managers, board members and fans alike need to focus our attention on what's best for the club and players within it. Help us set the example the rest of the league and state wants to follow.

It's not complicated; the trick to sportsmanship is to remind one another to " **Pause** ". This season let's try to focus on the " **Pause** " take a few breaths to calm ourselves down and refocus our energy into something positive. If you see a parent getting frustrated and yelling or making comments at the referee take the initiative and simply say, "**Pause.**" Let this be the simple message which serves as a reminder of how our actions have consequences.

For those few coach's I was referring to earlier, I want to take this opportunity to be very clear. Simply because the referee has not carded you, this by no means indicates your actions are considered acceptable and you are clear and free of potential sanctions. WMYSA takes each and every complaint we receive very seriously. As I begin to see the same names showing up on referee reports, in my emails or on my voice mail I begin to get concerned. As a result, we have and will continue to send representatives to games to observe the environment in order to determine which course of action to take.

Moving forward we would all prefer to hear less about coaches and fans making abusive comments at referees, players coaches etc. Sportsmanship is not simply about being respectful to the referees, it's showing class to your opponents. When I see scores like 18-1 I wonder what that coach was thinking. Likewise, those coaches need to be concerned about what WMYSA is thinking.

Thank you and please have a safe and courteous rest of the season.

By Ken Pope  
WMYSA President