



# Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun



OPERATIONAL MANUAL



SOUTHS & parents

working together  
to put our kids **First**

*It's so much more than the game!*





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## What is Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun?

Today's parents have an important role in the delivery and support of sporting activities for their own and other children. With it comes a clear responsibility to act in a constructive and encouraging manner at all times.

Barracking and wanting your child to perform well is human nature, but it is critical that this should be done in a responsible manner, avoiding the ugly parent syndrome at all times.

Souths United invests much time and effort in developing strategies that support the participation of over 750 players annually. Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun is a program that has been designed to guide parents so that both they and their children obtain the maximum benefit and enjoyment from their participation in junior programs and matches.

Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun includes recommendations to manage

situations where parents become over-enthusiastic and risk having a negative impact on their children's activities.

The basic principles of Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun are to remind parents that:

- Sport for children is a vital part of their growing up
- Children like to win but, more importantly, they want to have fun
- Parents need to set the right example at the sports ground, not just at home
- Parents should be proud of their child's efforts, irrespective of the results
- Sport is important to children's self esteem.

It is our aim for junior programs and matches to be conducted in a positive, encouraging and fun environment. Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun provides the guidance for achieving this objective.

## Program Objectives

The specific objectives of the Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun program are to:

- 1 Provide a formal framework in which junior teams can encourage constructive parent behaviour
- 2 Develop parental understanding of the importance of setting the right example in junior sport
- 3 Increase parent/guardian ownership in providing a quality sporting environment
- 4 Promote good social behaviour in junior sport
- 5 Promote appreciation and foster increased respect for the role of the referee
- 6 Promote encouragement of all children in both teams
- 7 Decrease the number of conflict situations at junior matches



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Souths asks parents to observe the following abbreviated Code of Fair Play:

- 1 **Remember that children play sport for their enjoyment, not yours**
- 2 Encourage children to participate but do not force them
- 3 **Be *process driven* not *result driven***
- 4 Focus on a child's efforts and self esteem rather than whether they win or lose
- 5 **Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or for the team losing the game**
- 6 Remember that children learn best by example – applaud the efforts of all players in both teams
- 7 **Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from the sport**
- 8 Show appreciation of volunteer coaches, officials and administrators, without whom your child could not participate
- 9 **Respect referees' decisions and teach children to do likewise**
- 10 Remember that smoking and the consumption of alcohol is unacceptable at junior sport



## Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun Parents' Information Sessions

Reminding and encouraging parents to support their children and team in a positive and constructive manner is the major aim of the Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun program. An essential part of the program is therefore the information sessions for parents to be conducted at the beginning of the season.

Components of the Information Session:

- 1 Introduction by Club President or Vice-President strongly endorsing the program and calling for parental support
- 2 Introduction of the session facilitator
- 3 Detailed elaboration of each of the 10 points of the Parent Code of Fair Play and the need for them to be strictly observed
- 4 Distribution of the brochure
- 5 Outline of why children play sport:
  - To play games and have fun
  - To mix with and socialize with their mates
  - For the feeling of self development
  - For the feeling of self development and fulfillment
  - For the challenge of the contest
- 6 Explanation of the benefits of children playing sport to develop:
  - Communication and social skills
  - Character, commitment and self esteem
  - Discipline and sense of achievement
  - Sportsmanship, respect for officials and opposition players and an understanding of winning and losing

- 7 Overview of the key points for reinforcement with parents:
  - Children like to win, but participation and enjoyment come first
  - Children are not little adults; let them play their game as a positive experience that will encourage them to a life-time involvement in sport
  - Support and applaud effort, discuss the game but never criticise
  - Display self-control – don't embarrass your children or yourself
  - Support referees and encourage players to accept their decisions
  - Above all, support an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment
  - After the game, speak briefly and rationally
  
- 8 Explanation of possible sanctions. While reinforcing that the aims of the program are raising awareness and encouragement, explain the administrative processes of the Behaviour Management Policy at Souths in match day monitoring and dealing with any reports of unacceptable behaviour (breaches of a Code of Fair Play)
  
- 9 Summary of the main components of the information session, including questions and answers.
  - In addition to questions that would have been asked during the session, invite further questions and discussion in order to clear up any lingering misunderstandings
  - Advise parents who they should contact within the Club if they have queries or wish to raise any matters during the year
  - Provide a concise, positive overview. Call for parental support and stress that the aim of the program is to provide the best environment for their children.

## Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun Coordinator

The appointment and role of a Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun coordinator are critical elements of the program.

### 1 APPOINTMENT

Each team is to appoint a Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun coordinator for each home game. The coordinator needs to meet the following criteria:

- Personal – be mature and have a high level of commonsense and an ability to identify situations without overreacting
- Knowledge – have an awareness of the Codes of Fair Play for Parents and Spectators and Coaches and the Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun procedures
- People Skills – have good communication with adults and children, be co-operative, positive and friendly and be able to manage a variety of situations
- Conflict resolution – be able to deal with difficult people and manage a possibly difficult situation.

### 2 ROLE & DUTIES

- Encouragement – at all times encourage parents and spectators to observe the Code of Fair Play and display positive behaviour
- Public Relations – assume a public relations role with parents and supporters, explaining and reinforcing the philosophy of Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun and sensitively explaining the importance of parental role models
- Observance and presence – maintain a clear but calm presence and profile at all times. Monitor and communicate with the appropriate club personnel and parents as required

- Reports – where necessary, report serious and/or continued breaches of the Code of Fair Play in accordance with the system outlined. Forms are available from a member of the Management Committee or at the Clubhouse from the Grounds Official on duty.
- Meetings – attend meetings of the club as required in relation to reports
- Identification – coordinators are to wear the jacket provided to each team. They are to remain visible to spectators at all times.

## Code of Fair Play Breaches

While education, encouragement and parental support will reduce infringements, it is possible that breaches of the Code of Fair Play will occur from time to time.

To provide for such incidents, the following administrative procedures should be followed:

- 1 The appointment of a Thumbs Up To Kids & Fun coordinator by each home team. Refer Roles and Duties on Page 8
- 2 Where a parent or spectator's behaviour is deemed inappropriate, the coordinator should approach the parent or spectator and politely and calmly address the issue
- 3 Where a parent or spectator continues to breach the Code of Fair Play, the coordinator should report the matter to the Club President or Vice-President who will then follow the procedures outlined in the Club's Behaviour Management Policy. An Incident Report should be completed – refer Behaviour Management Policy.

It is essential that at all times that natural justice and the privacy of the individual are respected and dealt with sensitively, irrespective of the alleged breach of a Code of Fair Play.

