**Attention all Secretaries ,Managers  ,Coaches, Volunteers and Parents etc.**

As informed at the AGM, the league will be introducing several measures to change the culture and environment that our children are exposed to during games.

This will also include the behaviour by all involved to ensure **respect** is part of the everyday matchday routines. We expect no abuse to referees, no unacceptable roaring at players and Parents/spectators to

applaud/support good play of all involved (Yes-both Teams ! ).

To this end the following is asked by all clubs/coaches and players to **implement immediately from the first game** this season at every level.

**1.Match Routines.**

**Start of Game** - Captains will bring team to Centre of pitch from sidelines. Teams line up Centre approaching from the same/opposite halfway-lines, After toss etc. both teams walk and shake hands.

**During the Game**- all subs ideally seated in technical area; subs will shake hands as they come on/off pitch at halfway line. No player on until player coming off arrives at halfway line.

**Match break** -  (Half time)- teams will gather on opposite sides for duration of break. Only manager/Captain can talk to referee if required – no other club official/person

**Match end -** Captains will bring team (including Management team) in file to halfway line and both teams will shake hands with everyone concerned including the officials who will be thanked by all.

The winning team may stand in two lines and applaud the loosing team if they so desire.

Any team(serial offenders) not following the above protocols will/may be fined by the league if reported by the referee , opposing team (via their club Sec ) or DDSL match observer.

**2.Sideline Behaviour by club/Team/ Officials**

Children are encouraged to develop themselves via their own experience on the pitch and therefore no excessive Coaching/shouting at any player will be accepted.

We also want Management teams staying in their technical areas and not always parading up and down sidelines ,this affects hugely the behaviors of parents/spectators.

As we must set examples-

No smoking ,foul language, or any encroachment by anyone on the pitch is permitted. Monkey see monkey do!

The Captain only, may ask the management (of his own team) to cease such behavior by his own team or raise the matter with the referee.

**3.Match procedures for Parents/supporters**

Remember this is their game -not yours ! Therefore, what children are exposed to seeing on the sidelines must be of the highest standards. Players will be empowered to not accept sub-standard behavior

from anyone including their own parents. We all have a legal and moral duty to protect children -The League, The Clubs, The Coaches, The Referees etc.

Both sets of supporters should be assembled on opposite sides of the pitch(where possible) at all times. No coaching or instructions by parents at any time-this is the managements job, and they should not be undermined in their role and

it shows a lack of respect to all concerned including your child.

There is no place for aggression, non-equality ,shouting or screaming in children’s sport and should Children really see their Parents, or anyone behave like this at **THEIR** game.

**4.Supervision & Support from Clubs**

All clubs are asked to appoint a person responsible for Respect/behaviour standards in the club.

Each team is asked where possible to have a parent/person to assist club in this area with other parents etc on match days.

**5. Referees and volunteer club officials**

Without these people there is no game and yes, they are human like us all. They will make mistakes, get it wrong sometimes but in most cases, they do their best. No person, club official, player and /or any parent or supporter

has the right to talk, abuse, threaten etc.at any time before, during or after a game.

Referees will now have the power to freeze games this season where such behavior happens along with using cards/match abandonment etc. Referees will also display the highest standards in setting examples

in the children’s environment at all times and may be asked to grade behaviours on a match-by-match basis.

**6.Referee allocations by the league**

This is a major problem for the league and we are actively working with the FAI to address the shortage of referees allocated to the league. There is no short-term fix and one of the main reasons for the **‘Respect & Behavior** ‘ actions is to stop

the dropout rate of referees that has been happening.

We are currently engaged with the FAI to find solutions/assistance in this area. Every stakeholder-Clubs, Officials, Players .Parents and supporters need to take a collective responsibility in dealing with the solution and we in the DDSL are committed to creating an environment for the players to teach the adults how to behave as the adults clearly have not been successful in this regard. We intend to operate a zero-tolerance policy moving forward based on our resources in this area but need the buy in from all!

For the coming season, we will be allocating referees from the oldest age groups down depending on the number of available referees we have each weekend. We have put in a new system for referees identifying availability, acceptance of a fixture ,results, match reports to improve and maximize the referees time at our disposal.

**7.Referees (New & CMO’s)**

We are also looking at introducing a new initiative for club match officials (CMO’S) who will be persons that clubs can use for all Home games up to U13 to ensure games are played. Each club may have to provide  person for each X number of SSG teams to ensure this initiative commences. We see CMO’s being past footballers, parents, other coaches, young players, and the like in clubs who can step up to ensure the kids play, Each CMO will be registered on the System and be provided with on-line training to assist. They will also receive the Home match fee agreed by their clubs. The league will then be offering CMO’s additional training, Courses, Subsidies should they wish to progress further. The Plan is to create a pool of 500 people to assist in ensuring games are played along with creating a platform to start people on the refereeing path should they wish to ensure our players get what they deserve. We have engaged with the FAI on this and will update clubs as this progresses.

At the time of writing, we have over 1700 games per weekend from 8’s to 18’s with a ref pool of 325 people with generally only 275 refs available ,so even if these refs cover 3 game a weekend, it leaves us with almost 1000 games needing refs! It is accepted that 60% are in the SSG sections but we also be aware that over 20 million player development minutes are lost per season because of no referees, and this needs urgent action. We will be writing to all clubs further in more detail as this progresses.

In the interim and the intention that all children deserve to play ,any game that has no referee allocated, the home team is asked to provide a ref or responsible adult to officiate to ensure the game is played.

**8.Cancellations of Games.**

All requests for games off must be submitted with full details in writing only by E-mail to requests@ddsl.ie  at least 3 weeks (21 Days) in advance. Once fixtures are set Cancellations will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances. No verbal requested will be accepted and only instructions from the club secretary will be accepted. Clubs should refer to rules governing same. As the policy is to keep the children always playing, requests should not be taken as automatic and will be confirmed in writing by a league official.

**A number of themed weekends will be introduced during the season to highlight this approach such as;**

**NO Parent Weekends(drop & Go), Silent Sidelines excl Coach’s),Silent Sidelines for all, Player only talking weekends, Games without ref’s weekends, Respect Refs weekends, etc.**

**‘’LET THE CHILDREN PLAY ITS THEIR GAME !’’**