

"I am glad you are consistently coming to our games. I know the players appreciate the support. I welcome your applause for good play from all players and your encouragement. I am open to you talking to me about your child, the team in general, soccer or anything else that's on your mind, so long as you do it after a game or practice.

"I want to make it clear that I am the coach. The coach is the only one who should be giving on field instruction to the players. These are young amateur players - they should be playing for the joy of the game. They should not have to contend with spectators yelling instructions to them. For a young player that sort of thing is at best confusing, usually embarrassing (particular if its your parent yelling) and in its worst forms humiliating.

"I think we all want a positive atmosphere for our children. So let me be clear - I will not tolerate sideline coaching. I don't have the time during a game to be diplomatic so if I see it happening during a game I will deal with it in the quickest and bluntest way available. If the behaviour continues to be a problem I will only play the offending parents child when that parent is not standing on the sideline. If that parent wants to watch out of voice range thats fine.

"If you find it hard not to yell instructions here are some suggestions:

1. Keep a well filled cup of hot coffee or tea with you. Its hard to be demonstrative when got a cup of scalding hot liquid in your hand.
2. Try chewing gum.
3. Bite on a pencil.
4. Relax."

### **Guidelines for Sideline Behavior**

1) **BE POSITIVE.** Be supportive. Cheer for the team. Encourage all of the players. Keep negative comments to yourself, especially those directed at another parent's child. Remember that the players are doing the best that they can and that playing good soccer is more difficult than it looks.

2) **DO NOT COACH.** Let the coaches make adjustments as they see the need. Many times the instruction from a spectator is exactly the opposite of the instruction given by the coach. Allow the players the freedom to make their own decisions and learn from their mistakes. Spectator statements like "STAY WIDE", "CLEAR IT", "PASS THE BALL", "GET RID OF IT", "MOVE UP", "MOVE BACK", etc. tend to undermine the need for the players to communicate with each other.

3) **NEVER ADDRESS PLAYERS ON THE OTHER TEAM,** except to encourage.

4) **TREAT THE OFFICIALS WITH RESPECT.** All officials make mistakes. All humans make mistakes. Let the officials be human. Let the coaches approach the officials if they feel the need. The ref may be wrong, but not as often as you are? Have you ever seen a ref change his mind because a parent shouted at him?

5) Do not engage in game related discussions with parents from the opposing team. We will be playing these teams for many years to come. We want to be known in the soccer community as an organization that has "**CLASS**" whether we win, lose or draw. The game score will not be remembered. The argument or inappropriate remarks will be.

6) **LEAVE THE GAME ON THE FIELD.** When the game is over, no amount of comment, question or discussion with the players, officials or coaches can change the outcome. Regardless of the outcome, the coaches will evaluate the performance; reinforce the good things and work to correct the things needing improvement.

7) **KEEP THE GAME FUN.** Winning is more fun than losing but each player should enjoy

playing because they love the game. Avoid offering bribes or “pumping up” your child. Allow them to become self motivated. Make sure that you take time to enjoy the game yourself. I have heard comments from some of the team that they dread it when their parents start shouting at the ref. It is noticeable that when some parents get more and more agitated their child gets more and more withdrawn during the game.

Think about your own job, if you had someone who you knew was going to shout at you every time you made a mistake, wouldn't you stop putting yourself in the position to make the mistake. That is what happens with some of the player on this team. They would rather not have the ball than risk having it and making a mistake!

### **The Six Things You Should Say to your Child**

by Bruce Brownlee, Atlanta, Georgia

A lot of soccer parents with good intentions give a 30-minute lecture in the car on the way to each match. Too often this lecture is filled with all of their child's supposed deficiencies while including tons of playing advice. The kids arrive far off their optimal mental state, and dreading the critique they are likely to hear, whether they want it or not, on the way home. Kids who are massaged in this way tend not to play badly, they just tend to not play, possibly to avoid making mistakes.

Parents should memorize and use the following six simple phrases:

#### **Before the Match**

1. I love you.
2. Good luck.
3. Have fun.

#### **After the Match**

1. I love you.
2. It was great to see you play.
3. What would you like to eat?