

Communication Between Parents and Coaches

From the 2001 US Youth Soccer adidas Workshop and Coaches Convention

OVERVIEW

- ☆ Understanding of parent and coach roles
- ☆ Philosophy
- ☆ Positive environment
- ☆ Communication
- ☆ Listen and watch
- ☆ Understand the game
- ☆ Expectations
- ☆ Benefits of soccer participation
- ☆ Adult solutions
- ☆ HAVE FUN

A. *Understanding of parent and coach roles*

Parents

Be prepared
 Be positive
 Play a little
 Soccer stimulus – TV, videos, live games
 Understand the game
 Be a ‘Team Parent’
 Unconditional love

Coaches

Is it fun?
 Is it functional?
 Teach the game
 Motivate
 Constructive communication
 Perspective – results vs. development
 Personal growth

Present clear boundaries

B. *Philosophy*

- Fun
- Development
- Inclusion
- Communication
- Fundamentals first
- Teaching
- Play

C. *Positive Environment*

SIDELINE BEHAVIOR	PRACTICE/GAME SET-UP	HOUSE RULES
Encouragement	Organized	Positive & Constructive
Focus on effort	Punctual	Individual Learning
Team Motivation	Roles Defined	Team Issues

D. *Communication*

- Two way
- Empathetic listening
- Clarify
- Commitment towards improvement
- Understanding of special situations
- Feedback
- Informational meetings

E. *Listen and Watch*

What are players saying?

- When speaking to teammates
- When speaking to parents
- When speaking to the coach

Watch body language

- Are they excited?
- What is their reaction to personal success or mistakes?
- What is their reaction when coaches or parents shout?

F. *Understand the Game*

- Watch: professional, college and ODP games
- Read: magazines & books
- Courses: attend a state coaching course or clinic
- Play: recreational adult leagues or pick-up games at the club
- Internet: usyouthsoccer.org, ussoccer.com, ussoccerfoundation.org, socceramerica.com, your state and club web sites
- Learn and stay up-to-date on the playing rules

G. *Expectations*

PARENTS	COACHES
Fun	Learn/develop through teaching the game
Learning/development	Success
Respect for my child	Team is prepared to compete
Opportunity to play well	Good experience
Protective mode: I want my child to experience success	Team atmosphere
Protective environment	Success
Healthy activity	Life-long soccer participants

H. *Benefits of Soccer Participation*

- Family travel
- Life-long love of sports
- Better understanding of people and relationships
- Well balanced in life
- Dialogue before and after matches

I. *Adult Solutions*

<u>COACH</u>	<u>PARENT</u>
Clarify goals and boundaries in 1 st meeting	Right playing level
Philosophy of coaching	Research the coach
Define roles	Clearly understand coaches
Delegate	Philosophy
Costs	24 hour rule
Communicate clearly	Encouraging, not coaching
Expectations	Learn the game
Written evaluations	Practice with your child
Continuous learning	Be there: talk with your child
Talk to the parents at every opportunity	Stay positive and supportive

J. HAVE FUN

Focus on the process of playing the game, not the result. Goals for, goals against, wins, losses and ties are all fleeting, so adults and kids should focus more on the individual and team performance improvements. Look for new skills being executed for the first time by a player in a match. Look for and praise when teammates begin to execute new tactics together. Praise vociferously acts of good sportsmanship by your team's players and coaches! Think about the lessons that adults want children to learn from their participation in sports and applaud when they happen.

- ❑ Inclusion – of all of the players in training sessions and matches and occasionally have the parents participate as players too
- ❑ Think of ways to increase the players' time with a ball
- ❑ Positive constructive feedback
- ❑ Allow players ownership of the game – pick-up games at training now & then
- ❑ Balance in training sessions and matches between cooperation & competition
- ❑ All adults associated with the team have an obligation to practice good sportsmanship in front of the players and to teach and encourage Fair Play by all team players. The adults have a responsibility in this regard to all of the players on the team, not solely their child.

Parent – Coach Meeting

The following list includes key points for you to remember when you meet with the players' parents at the beginning of the season.

- I. Introduce yourself and your assistant coaches.
- II. Be prompt and organized in starting.
- III. Have refreshments if possible.
- IV. State your experience and qualifications, even if you have none, and your reasons for becoming a coach.
- V. Explain your philosophy and team objectives.
- VI. Review your methods of coaching. Describe a typical practice.
- VII. Discuss what is expected of parents and solicit their assistance.
- VIII. Collect parent contact information (postal address, phone numbers, E-mail addresses, etc.) and especially emergency contact information.
- IX. Ask the parents to let you know if there is any particular medical condition about their child you should know.
- X. Distribute information on the club and the practice/game schedule.
- XI. Discuss and perhaps give the adults a handout on the rules for their conduct at games.
- XII. Leave plenty of time so parents can ask you any questions or voice any concerns that they may have.

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