Communication
Parents & Coaches

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Effective Communication

- **Listen** carefully and responsively
- Explain your **intent**
- Translate **criticisms** into requests
Effective Communication

Ask **questions** more creatively

Express more **appreciation**
Listen more carefully and responsively

- When people are upset their capacity to listen is diminished.

- Acknowledge what you hear by restating their position – even if you don’t agree.
Parent to Coach

GREAT GAME, GIRLS.

COACH! COACH!

I WANT A WORD WITH YOU ABOUT MY DAUGHTER.

WHY IS SHE AVERAGING ONLY 17.5 M.P.G.?

M.P.G.?

MINUTES PER GAME.

OH, FOR A SECOND I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE A CARBURETOR PROBLEM.
Effective Communication

- Know when and where to speak to the coach on any emotional matter.
- Generally wait for 24 hours before initiating a discussion on a problem. Give your thoughts and emotions a chance to level off.
- If you have a problem to discuss do so one on one and in private.
Parent to Coach

COACH, I AM NOT GOING TO SIT BY AND WATCH MY DAUGHTER BEING SHORTCHANGED FOR PLAYING TIME.

POOR DAWN, SHE MUST BE SO EMBARRASSED.

DADDY, PLEASE...

DON'T WORRY, TWINKLE, DADDY WILL TAKE CARE OF THIS.

TWINKLE, ...?

ACCORDING TO THE HUMILIAT-O-METER, SHE JUST BLEW BY EMBARRASSED AND WENT STRAIGHT TO MORTIFIED.

COACH, YOU SHOULD KNOW I'M A LAWYER.
Talking to a Coach

Is it appropriate?

• When?
• How?
• Where?
• What?
• Who?
Parent to Coach

Mr. Pruitt, Dawn is a very important member of our team...

Then why is she averaging only 17.5 minutes per game? And much less in important game situations?

Daddy, don't...

I just happen to have the stats of every game broken down and analyzed for you.

Come on, sweetie, the coach has some studying to do.

Pssst, Dad. Arthur Andersen has some used paper shredders up for auction on eBay.
Effective Communication

• Try to get the facts before you begin the conversation.

• If you don’t have the facts then start off the conversation asking for them.

• Approach the exchange as a dialogue not a monologue or tirade.
Parent to Coach

MR. PRUITT, AT THIS LEVEL OF SOCCER, OUR GOAL IS NOT EQUAL GAME TIME FOR EACH GIRL. THESE GIRLS HAVE WORKED HARD TO GET TO A LEVEL WHERE THE GOAL IS TO WIN THE GAME. AND EACH GIRL, INCLUDING YOUR DAUGHTER, HAS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN ACHIEVING THAT GOAL.

I WANT TO EASE DAWN INTO THE GAME PLAN. IF WE'RE PATIENT WITH HER, WITH HER TALENT, SHE CAN BE A DOMINANT FORCE ON THIS TEAM.

YOU'RE PATRONIZING ME, AREN'T YOU?

MR. PRUITT-- NO, NO, I LIKE IT. I LIKE IT A LOT.
LET THE COACHES COACH

Your coach, volunteer or paid, provides guidance, skill instruction and supervised fun for youngsters in soccer. Respect the coaches and their decisions. Their concern is the whole team, not just your player. They need your support. Don’t undermine, second-guess, or criticize a coach in public. Most coaches will listen to parents in private and may ask you to help with practice.
Parents’ Meeting

- Enables parents to understand what your program is trying to achieve
- Helps them to get to know you
- Informs parents about your club
- Allows expectation to be voiced
- Helps you to understand parents' concerns
- Establishes clear lines of communication
- Obtains support from parents
Parents’ Meeting

• Share your soccer playing and coaching experience with the parents
• Give them a written copy of your coaching philosophy
• Explain what a typical training session and match will be like
• Give out the coach’s and team administrator’s contact information
Explain your intent

• The more important the conversation, the more important it is for the listener to know and share the overall goal of the conversation from the beginning.

• “John, I need to talk to you about Mark’s playing time right now!” (not good)

• “Hello John, I really need your help and expertise in sorting out how Mark can get more playing time. Do you have a minute to talk about it?” (better)
Translate criticisms into requests

 Berm.When we put people on the defensive, their capacity to listen decreases

 Berm. Specific action focuses attention on the present situation
Translate criticisms into requests

Use specific, action oriented, positive language…

“it would help me…if you would” or “in order to…”
Asking questions more creatively

• “Yes/No” questions tend to shut people up.
• In general, “how” questions are better than “why” questions.
• Why = past
• How = future
Express more appreciation

-The bond of appreciation makes the relationships strong enough to problem solve.

“Thank you for speaking with me on this matter. And thanks for all of your contributions to the team!”
Ready for your first game, Assistant Coach Oliver? I want you to keep the defense awake.

I'm really nervous. I'm not sure I know what to do.

It's simple—just stand here and shout the things...

...you used to shout over there.
Further Information

Please visit the US Youth Soccer web site for more information for coaches and parents.

usyouthsoccer.org