

PARENT ZONE

FOCUS: THE CAR RIDE HOME

"I don't know why your coach does that! Next time you should ask him to play you more!"

Contradicting information your child is receiving from a coach instantly causes conflict mentally for the player. Your son / daughter will feel pressured to please both you and their soccer coach - which is hard! If you have questions for the coach, wait 24 hours and address them privately yourself.

Why did you do that?

That was a silly mistake. You need to try harder and do better than that! What was that?!"

A couple of points here...Firstly, players know when they made mistakes! They do not need reminding! Secondly, vague comments like 'try harder' do not inspire a response from young players. Chances are they are trying hard - it just wasn't a good day! Finally, there is a coach that provides analysis for your son/daughter. They would prefer you to be their parent.

"You are amazing! We are going to sign you up for more sessions, you can play town, club and ID programs. You will be a star at high school and college and go pro and be famous!"

Of course it is important to support and praise children in their career! It is also important not to overwhelm them. Often, they enjoy playing and all the extra's don't cross their mind! Be careful not to put too much pressure on your child or burn them out early with too many demands on their time.

"I don't care if you have had enough. We have paid and you committed, so you will keep playing now until the end of the season".

Whilst all players can have bad days and insinuate they have had enough; it is incredibly difficult for a young person to genuinely express vulnerability and concerns about something they are expected to enjoy. Parents should take the time to explore a player's opinions on their experience. If you have concerns, ask the coach for feedback and advice.

The ride home from soccer has the ability to be an excellent vessel for bonding between you and your child. Unfortunately, a large majority of young players cite the ride home as one of the more negative experiences in their career. It is important for parents to remember the person behind the player. Particularly at younger ages, the majority of players are not even interested in the game once it is over; they certainly do not want to re-live it for an hour on the way home - especially if the game or the tournament did not go very well.

Young players have a coach, they have the referee and team mates. They will have multiple coaches at school, town and club. They spend all week receiving information and being told what to do and how to do it by coaches and teachers. Their favorite time is with you at home when it is all over! For WSC parents - be a parent! Discuss where you are going for dinner, plans for the rest of the day or what the next week has in store for everybody. The key for a young person is that everyone plays a role in their life and if those roles become blurred it is challenging for them. Let them invite you into their soccer world at their discretion—otherwise stick to what you are amazing at - being their parent.