

Winning versus Development

Ah yes, the age old cliché. My response when addressing folks relative to this issue is quite simple- **“If you develop players correctly; the winning takes care of itself.”** We must abandon the Vince Lombardi idea that says- “Winning isn’t everything; it’s the only thing.” and appreciate the growth of players and their new found abilities to play effectively and creatively as they age. We must applaud those milestones as well as appreciate the many failed attempts to achieve playing success. If a child is learning how to read, we appreciate and applaud each word they master and page read, not just when they’ve read an entire book. **Development and growth is a journey; children need to be supported in order to enjoy the ride.**

Development in any sport is tied intrinsically to human development. As we develop physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and cognitively, our ability to perform the associated tasks relative to those traits becomes apparent. There is a clear reason why U6 players play 4 v 4 with training sessions that feature problem solving fun games. They’re 5 or 6 years old!! Conversely, a group of 16 year olds can be exposed to the most advanced methods of coaching, heightened developmental standards, and demands because as humans; they are structured for it. We coach relative to the competency of the players under our care. An emphasis on winning can be infused once the player understands the concept and can handle it emotionally and socially.

Fear. Players are afraid to try new and creative things because of the response they get from the coach and parents. If a player tries something creative and fails, too often the child hears the sounds of displeasure from the parental sidelines. “Awww!”, “What are you doing??” or “Why didn’t you just...” The coach may show frustration and disdain especially if the situation cost the team the ball or (Oh my!), a goal. If a child hears applause and words of support when they try something; human nature has them willing to try it again. And that is what we want. Players need never be afraid to try new things if indeed the support mechanism is in place amongst the parents and coaches. Understand as well that trying new things means taking risks which is an important part of not only developing creative players; but players in general!

This excerpt is taken from the article [“5 Reasons We Lack Creative Soccer Players: Ways Parents Can Help”](#) by Giovanni Pacini March 15, 2017 published on [SoccerParenting.com](#)