



Season Coaching Tips and Guidelines

Tips...

- 1. Engaging players in your practice and avoiding disruptions...**
 - a. Limit the amount of time spent on each activity to “No more than” 15-20 minutes
 - b. Have your next activity laid out and ready...and transition your players from one to the other quickly.
 - c. Time Kills Concentration and Focus...the more time they have standing around, talking, and to goof off, the harder it is for you to engage them and get anything out of the activity.
- 2. Training Area Set-Up...**
 - a. Arrive 10-15 minutes early and set up your activities before your players arrive...
 - i. Set up your cones
 - ii. Lay out your Pennies if you plan to use them later
 - iii. Set up multiple activities so that you can quickly transition from one to the next
- 3. No Lines, Laps, or Lectures...**
 - a. Limit lines to 2-3 deep at best. Keeps them rotating faster and active in the activity
 - b. Do not punish your players...i.e. Run Laps or Suicides, or anything of the sort...if a player or group of players is being disruptive, simply...
 - i. Remove them from the activity group
 - ii. Or better yet, put them in charge of the activity’s execution. Making them responsible, forces them to focus and holds them accountable
 - c. Limit lectures...if you stop an activity more than 2-3 times for more than 15-20 seconds each time, then you’re talking too much. Make the correction, or ask them how they can do it better, and move on
- 4. Parent Management:** This can be a critical component of team development. We suggest...
 - a. Conduct your parent meeting WITH the players present, and set guidelines for both in each other’s presence. This way they both understand your requirements.
 - b. Ask parents not to coach from the opposite sideline...and empower player to “not listen to their parents during the game...you’re the coach!”
 - c. I’ve actually gone as far as threatening to bench the child if I hear the parent coaching from the sidelines. Harsh but effective crowd control.
- 5. Development Progression:**
 - a. Space Soccer: this is when you put a “No talking” restriction on your scrimmage. When players can’t talk, they tend to look up more to survey the field, which develops their field vision
 - b. Passing vs. Scoring: During practice, you can resort to activities that give points for completed passes vs. actually scoring on a goal. If your team passes well, scoring will come more naturally.
 - c. Small Sided/Tight Spaces: Begin your scrimmages with smaller playing areas. Yes, it’ll be harder for them to complete passes initially, but as they learn to spread out and raise their heads, they’ll become better and faster passers. You can evolve your activity to larger spaces after they complete a certain amount of passes in the smaller one.
- 6. Communicating with your players:** Imagine standing in front of basketball great Shaquille O’Neal at 7’ 2” while he gives you basketball pointers. Likely a little intimidating for you and I (I stand a mere 6’ 1”). That’s how your players feel when you speak to them “from above”. So, when you communicate with your team, either bend down to their eye level or go as far as kneeling in front of them to get eye level. It’s far less intimidating for a child.

Game Day Guidelines...

1. **Your Job As A Rec Coach:** It's NOT to win, but to develop.
 - a. **What's that mean? It means you:**
 - i. Play players at all positions (except Goalie unless they want to) whether they want to or not. Well rounded players succeed later in their soccer careers
 - ii. Encourage and Empower the players by asking them questions and getting them involved in the in-game decision-making
2. **50% Guarantee:**
 - a. Every child is guaranteed 50% playing time regardless of practice attendance and skill level. This is a U.S. Youth Soccer Rec Soccer Rule, so PLEASE adhere to it best you can. I will hear about it if you don't from affected parents.
3. **5 Goal Differential Rule:** We must realize that there is little to be gained by a huge goal differential win. This only negatively affects the opposing players, and does nothing to develop your own team.
 - a. When up by 5 goals (or less, your choice), resort to a 3-5 pass rule where your team can't try to score unless they complete 3-5 passes.
 - b. If you play another club and they run up the score on you, PLEASE LET ME KNOW...
4. **Referee Treatment:** Simple...don't argue with them, don't criticize them, or berate them. In many cases they are kids just a few years older than your age group, and just trying to stay close to the game and make a few bucks. Be respectful and encouraging to them.
5. **Pre-Game:**
 - a. Stretch your players...especially when it's cooler outside. 5-7 minutes prior to kick off is best
 - b. Warm up your Goal Keeper prior to kick off...easy tosses or ground passes. No rockets!
6. **Sideline Rules...NO EXCEPTIONS**
 - a. Only registered coaches on your player's bench area. Background checked!
 - b. Parents ARE NOT ALLOWED in the bench area under any circumstances unless their child is injured and requires their assistance.
 - c. If a parent insists on being around the bench area, tell them to leave...call me if they don't.
 - d. Parents also CANNOT be behind the Goal while their child is playing Goalie...disruptive to the child, and to the team in general.
7. **Equipment...**
 - a. Shin guards MUST BE covered by socks...no exceptions
 - b. Cleats must be "soccer cleats" ...not football cleats (difference is Football cleats have a cleat at the very front/middle of the sole). Player will not be allowed to play with football cleats.
 - c. Hooded under garments...Hood MUST BE under shirt vs. hanging over