



Coaching From the Sideline

As part of my role as Director of Coaching for the club, I observe the fields on game day throughout the weekend. For the most part, what I experience is the framework for a very positive environment for the children to learn and play the beautiful game.

To really dig deeper on what a positive environment feels like or better yet, SOUNDS like, there should be no instruction coming from the parents on the sidelines who are watching the game.

Our club's philosophy on sideline behavior is to *'LET THE PLAYERS PLAY'*, otherwise, we are creating a negative impact on the players in numerous ways:

- Soccer is a problem-solving and decision-making game. By instructing the players *YOU* are taking those important skills away from them. It's the equivalent of standing over their shoulders when they are taking a test and giving them all the answers!
- *YOU* will most likely confuse the child as they will not know who to listen to. The coach wants them to do one thing but Mom or Dad wants them to do something else. *'What do I do?!'* This will most likely lead to a poor performance and more frustration from the player, coach and parents.
- We are creating a distracted player. How many times have you seen a child make a pass, take a shot, lose the ball and look straight over at Mom or Dad for their approval or advice? Don't we want our children to take responsibility for their own actions? To self-reflect and understand what they may have done differently so they can self-correct for the next time the situation arises in a game? Again, by coaching from the side and making them dependent on you, *YOU* are taking all those skills away from them.

What is said on the car ride home is equally as important as the behavior during the game. The role of the parent is not to question the coach's decisions that were made during the game. This includes talking negatively about any substitutions that were made or questioning tactical decisions that were executed during the game. This undermining

of the coach can damage the player's attitude towards training and any future guidance given by the coach on a match day.

What we end up with here is a negative, repeating circle of poorer player performance, increased frustration and criticism. Those familiar with John O Sullivan's fantastic TED Talk on '[Changing The Game](#)' will know that there are five very effective words that should be used once the game is over ***"I LOVE WATCHING YOU PLAY"***.

If you truly want your child to succeed as a soccer player and as a young adult going through life who can think for themselves, problem solve and make responsible decisions, then let's keep the sideline noise down to POSITIVE encouragement only and NOT instruction. YOU can be the difference!

I hope you enjoyed this article on why coaching from the touchline has a negative impact on soccer player's development.

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