



NORTHWEST SOUND YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION NSYSA

Parents Are an Important Part of the Team, Too

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From helping a child first connect with the game, to encouraging their positive growth and development, parents are an essential part of a young player's life — before, during and after the game. The behavior you exhibit on the sidelines throughout the season has a serious impact on both your player and his/her teammates, and it is your responsibility as a parent to make sure you are following proper sideline etiquette

To help you prepare for your role in the season to come, Michael Langlois, author of "How Well Do You Communicate? A Guide to Better Communication with Players and Parents for Youth Soccer Coaches" and a frequent contributor to NSCAA.com, offers a reminder of little things we, as parents and team supporters watching from the sidelines, can do this State Cup and spring season to ensure success for all:

1. **Make positive comments from the sideline. Be encouraging** - Young athletes need positive reinforcement and encouragement. Even small encouragements can go a long way to boost a young player's confidence and, in turn, performance. Their coaches will instruct them, either during the game or at halftime, and during practices. We can often see a young player make that extra effort when they hear encouraging words from the sideline about their hustle. Some good encouragements include: "Great Job, Blue Team!" "Nice Hustle, Johnny!" "Great Shot!" "Nice Teamwork!" "Good Ball!" and so on.
2. **Respect all participants of the game, including referees.** It's important to remember that referees are a key piece of the game and it is crucial to support their role with respect. It is the main goal of the referee to make the game safe and fun for the children – your support can help them achieve that goal. Referees, many of whom are youth themselves, are human and will make mistakes at times — just like the players. They are learning the game, too. As adults, it is our responsibility to ensure their learning process is supported with positive reinforcement and constructive criticism, not negative pressure from the sidelines. Your attitude towards referees will not only have a direct impact on the referees, but can set the tone for your players, their team and your fellow parents as well. Fostering the growth of our local referees will make them better referees in the future, and increase the number of outstanding, experienced refs for your children's games.



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3. **If you have a suggestion for your child's coach, arrange a time to meet or discuss away from other parents or players.** It's important that players have confidence and respect for their coaches. If you have an issue with your child's coach –regarding game strategy, playing time or other team-related issues — arrange an appointment to meet privately, away from a soccer field. This makes sure that your issue receives the attention it deserves from the coach, while not undermining his or her authority with the team.
4. **Respect and support your fellow soccer parents and spectators.** Remember that when it comes to youth soccer, we are talking about youngsters, not adults who are being paid to play professionally. Keep your interaction with parents on the other team as healthy and positive as possible. Of course, both team's parents want their children to win, but it's more important that the kids have fun, learn self-respect and build life skills for their futures.
5. **Before you speak or act, ask yourself,** "Will I be proud of what I am about to say or do when I reflect on it tomorrow?" We don't excuse athletes for doing inappropriate things in the "heat of the moment" (there are cards, penalties, suspensions, etc.), so we should apply similar standards to ourselves. Sometimes, just taking a second to consider the impact of your actions can be enough to help you hit the brakes.
6. **On the ride home, focus on the positives from the game.** Whether it is a coach's decision, a referee's call, a comment that was made, or some other aspect of the game that has yourself or your child upset after the game — let it go. Go home, relax and unwind. Talk positively with your child. The ride home is sometimes as important as the game itself. Make that time a good memory for your son or daughter by discussing as many positives as you can about him/her, the coach, teammates, etc.