

## Match Preparation

### **Pre-Game**

- Warm-ups need to be active, and focused on what players have been working on during the week; could be one or more games of 4 v 4
- Let players know the 3 areas of focus for that days game; should support the theme they have focused on during the week i.e. passing
- Line-ups need to be announced early on so players know where they are playing
- Try to speak to groups of players or individuals before the game, i.e starting defenders, or players who may not be starting
- GKs need to be worked separately and prepared properly for the start of the game
- Teams need to be physically and mentally focused at the start of the game

### **During the Game**

- Substitutes need to be spoken to when coming on and off the field with pertinent information
- Players need more warning and a chance to warm-up prior to being substituted on the game. Don't just put them straight on the field without this
- Think about tactical substitutions not just rotation of players
- Substitutions should be made to help the flow of game and give players a chance to play within certain groupings i.e. keep the same right side of the team at same time
- During the season all younger players (~U12 and below) should have had a chance to play all positions, do not pigeon hole players too early
- Coaches and their assistants need to limit amount of shouting and instructions, as players often get confused and distracted
- Try and let the players play as much as possible, letting the players make their own decisions
- Key point - If you need to speak to players, never speak to them when they have the ball, speak following a decision / play, when you substitute them or try to talk to them at half-time

### **Half Time**

- Quick water break and then get them all in together away from distractions, and parents – so players are listening and attentive
- Head coaches should make general team points to whole team about the 3 areas of focus
- Head coach and assistants should speak to individuals after 3 general team points have been made. If it is not a whole team point, it is good to get individuals or small groups (i.e. defenders) and speak to them specifically about something

### **Post Game**

- Give key feedback on the game to all players away from distractions and parents about 3 key focus points
- Have team cool down, and speak to individuals
- Ask about any injuries and tell the players when practice is during the week, and what you are going to work on – area of focus for next week!
- *Leave on a positive note – find one – it is still a game and children should leave feeling good about themselves and the game of soccer!*

**Remember why the children are playing – it is not always about winning and losing for them!**