

Do's and Don'ts for Coaches and Parents

- West-Mont United S.A. -

DON'T

1. ***DON'T shout instructions to the player with the ball.*** (The player has enough problems maintaining possession of the ball while making quick and difficult decisions about what to do next. The player doesn't need your input. The player must learn to make his/her own decisions.)
2. ***DON'T use phrases such as "Boot the ball", "Kick it", "Send it", "Belt the ball" etc.*** (First of all you are violating rule #1; second you are encouraging panic rather than good decision making and mindless kicking rather than possession of the ball.)
3. ***DON'T try to control the game from the sidelines. YOU CAN'T!*** (Soccer is not a game in which the coach is an active participant in the game itself. Soccer is a game played, controlled and ultimately coached by the players on the field. Teach the players to "coach" themselves.)
4. ***DON'T try to teach "aggressiveness".*** (In the game of soccer what is perceived as aggressive play is merely a reflection of the **confidence** a player has in his/her own abilities. Teach the skills that generate confidence; encourage players to believe in their skills and themselves. If you do they will play "aggressively". If you preach "aggressiveness" as a goal unto itself you will likely reap the opposite of what you seek.)
5. ***DON'T abuse game officials or show disrespect for your opponent.*** (Referees do make mistakes, but they make far fewer mistakes than your players. Your opponents deserve your respect; they are NOT your enemy! Your players will learn from your example; be aware of the example you are setting.)
6. ***DON'T forget Rule Number One!***

DO's

1. ***DO offer suggestions to players not currently involved in what is happening on the field.*** (Brief words of advice or wisdom are helpful to players who have the time to consider your advice. But the suggestions should be made to players currently out of the game or to players on the field, but far from the ball, who can give your counsel both attention and consideration.)
2. ***DO encourage players to use the skills they are being taught.*** (The learning of skills in practice is but the first step in the development of any player. Players must be encouraged [and sometimes pushed] to experiment with skills in scrimmages and games. If at first such an approach costs you goals, learn to accept such temporary setbacks as the price of progress. Do not view mistakes as unacceptable; recognize that each mistake is an opportunity to help a player improve. Soccer is a game best learned by trial and error. If you teach that mistakes are unacceptable you will discourage many from trying and progress will come to an end.)
3. ***DO teach the players to coach themselves on the field.*** (By the time players find themselves on a full size field they will not be able to hear you anyway. The players must learn to assist each other in making the hundreds of split-second decisions that each game requires.)
4. ***DO teach the players the skills. DO encourage them to hold the ball long enough to make good decisions about what to do next.*** (Although incorporating new possession skills into game situations often brings failure at first, abandoning the effort in favor of “booting” the ball guarantees that development will be limited.)