

Top Ten Things Coaches Wish Parents Would Do

By Mike Baptiste

1. **Try to get the players to practice on time, fully equipped, and ready to go.** While we understand some kids have back to back activities and account for that, there's no reason for a player without a previous activity to arrive at the field the minute practice starts. Players should arrive 5-10 minutes early, ready to play, with cleats/shin guards on, with a properly inflated ball and a water bottle.
2. **Let us know in advance if your child won't be able to make practice or a match.** Based on the number of players who can't make a given event, it can affect how we plan to run things. You don't need to ask permission - just let us know a couple days in advance if you can.
3. **Pay attention at practices.** If you have a child that can be a challenge - stick around at practice at least once a week and watch. If your child starts to become a distraction to the team during practice, ask the coach if they want you to step in and take care of it. Some may, some may not. But don't just drop your child off and run away, knowing they may be disruptive. It's not fair to the rest of the team. And don't ignore the obvious because it's your child. We coaches want EVERY child to have a chance to play and enjoy the game, but disruptive children sometimes become too much for a coach to handle and a parent really needs to step in and handle things.
4. **Refrain from coaching from the sidelines.** I say this as someone who is as guilty as any. Being a coach AND a parent, it can often be impossible to keep my mouth shut. But coaches want the players to focus on the game and any instruction they may shout out from the team touchline. So stick to cheering and encouragement. If you find the urge to coach overbearing - ask the coach if they need an assistant!
5. **Put your folding chairs at LEAST 4 yards away from the touchline.** Many fields do not include 'parent boundary lines', so often parents are so close to the touchline that players can't even take a step to throw the ball in. Plus it's a danger to players trying to make sliding saves or who collide/trip/lose control near the parents.
6. **Respect our decisions as coaches and if you have a problem, approach us about it.** Don't bottle it up inside, let it stew, and share it among the rest of the parents. We're not perfect, but perhaps given some additional explanation you might understand what we did. If not, at least you know why we did what we did. It also helps us to identify possible "blind spots" that we are not aware of. So communicating with us is a win/win situation.
7. **Try to have your paperwork, fees, and any other administrative stuff taken care of well in advance.** Even teams with adept team managers can be affected by parents dragging their feet with paperwork, confirming availability, and fees. If you're having financial trouble and need help, please ask for help! Yes, it can be awkward, but we have financial aid programs in place. We coaches just want the kids to play, have fun, and learn.
8. **Don't scream at your kids on or off the field if they make mistakes.** That's how they learn. Too many players are afraid of making mistakes at a young age on the field. A lot of this is because they don't want to hear their parents screaming at them from the sideline. Making mistakes are an integral part of the learning process.
9. **Volunteer to help your team or the club.** ALL of you. We are always in need of more help. Often a small group of individuals donate tons of time ensuring the teams and club operates smoothly. So when they ask for help doing concessions, tournament help, paperwork, uniforms, field maintenance, etc., offer to help. Too many clubs rely on a core group of committed but overworked volunteers to run things because parents aren't willing to donate an hour or two during the season. They aren't asking you to commit to multiple hours every week for the entire season (though they'd love it if you could!). Many hands make for light work.
10. **Have fun.** Youth soccer should be fun for kids AND adults alike. By keeping a level head and a positive attitude, you can have about as much fun as your child does. So keep things in perspective and have fun!

(This article is from US Youth Soccer Positive Parenting Program)