

Youth Soccer News: Wayne Harrison on Being A Better Youth Soccer Coach

Wayne Harrison coached San Diego Surf Soccer Club teams at the 33rd Surf Cup last weekend and wanted to share his observations on the coaching methodology . Harrison has published 12 books on youth soccer player development and coaching and is the Technical Director for San Diego Soccer Club.

Walking around watching games at tournaments it is interesting listening to the information coaches were giving out to their players; and perhaps more importantly; the WAY they delivered it.

We all have our moments (myself included) where we get frustrated and let ourselves down with unwarranted criticism to a player or to our team; I like to think my own feedback from the sidelines is 95% positive; Players will make mistakes and we as coaches MUST HELP players when they make mistakes; not chastise them. We must try to see the good in what they attempted.

For example, if it was a poor pass and the player gave the ball away but at the same time it was a GREAT decision We should praise their decision and encourage them to make a better pass next time. This approach encourages the player to try again, and not be afraid. Coaches can always work on improving the skills. That is our job, right?

So, back to what we started with; many very good coaches were giving positive information and avoiding criticism of their players as best they could; and you could see the players were not afraid to try things on the field.

There were also some quite vocally abusive coaches focusing on all that was wrong and praising very little.

Ask yourself *"Would you like to be coached by a person just like you?"*

I would like to play for me because I try to make it fun and at the same time educational; and I don't take myself too seriously; except when it really matters; and the players know when can have a laugh and a joke; and when we need to work. In my opinion, it's a fine line but easily achievable to get the best out of players.

And when it is fun, we as coaches should enjoy it more too; after all, we want to have a great time also.

Back to those same abusers: this is damaging behavior for the players confidence and development, plus **you could see the tension in these players who were almost afraid to try anything because if it didn't work and they would get shouted at.**

The very fact the players were worried as the ball came to them made them give the ball away even more. The fear of inciting the coach to yell at them prevented them from being imaginative on the ball.

Coaches should help their players relax and be successful on the field. We must all try to have a positive attitude. Yes, it is difficult sometimes but we need to fight the inner demons and praise our players. It is important to be positive.

Coaches need to realize no player tries to give the ball away deliberately.

Players all want to be successful; no one wants to let down their teammates, their parents; or their coach.

All youth soccer players want to be the best they can be.

The entire article can be read at:

<http://www.soccernation.com/wayne-harrison-on-the-power-of-positive-communication-in-coaching-youth-soccer-cms-4599>