



Creating a Positive and Productive Soccer Culture: A Guide for Perry Township Youth Soccer Club Parents

The most important goal of our program is to create a culture that promotes an appreciation of the game, player development, and a supportive community. Your role as parents is crucial in achieving this goal. Please take some time to read over the following tips that will help us all have a successful season and continue to build a club culture to be proud of:

Keep the long view of player development

As players learn, the focus needs to be on fundamentals. Foot skills, passing, and situational awareness are more important than immediate goals of winning the game, especially when players are young. We ask our coaches to emphasize these fundamentals and parents' reinforcement of this approach will help players as they develop.

Encourage your child to work on his/her fundamentals on their own.

Practice time is limited and players who want to develop their skills can benefit from additional time with the ball. You can get ideas for exercises from your coach or from any number of soccer websites. Keep this extra work fun and always voluntary. Parents can always join in the fun as well!

Support the team and not just your child.

Get to know the other players and parents. Cheer for other players and encourage your child to work with his/her teammates. Encourage your child to focus team goals and not only individual ones.

Be supportive of your child's coach.

Arrive at practices and games at the requested time and let the coach know if your child will be absent ahead of time. Consider volunteering in any support roles that are needed and initiate an open dialogue about any concerns you might have. Check out these tips for developing a coach-parent partnership

http://d3kv8ayplk3lle.cloudfront.net/sites/uploads/files/PCA_CoachParentPartnership_0.pdf

Let the coaches coach during the games and practices.

Try to cheer for players on the field without “joysticking” them. Encourage effort, smart plays, and sportsmanship. After the fact comments are the best: “good pass”, “good shot”, “great defense”, “good kick”, etc. Refrain from comments like: “boot it”; “crush it”, “smash it”, etc. Give positive reinforcement for good decisions rather than telling kids what to do. Assessing the situation and making decisions is a critical part of player development and players need space to do this without confusion from the sidelines. This means that they will sometimes make mistakes, which is also a part of the learning process.



Adhere to positive and respectful game etiquette.

Please do not yell at the ref, your child, or any other players or coaches (including the other team). Please refrain from cursing and other questionable language. Don't forget that no tobacco products, dogs, or anything else that could harm players' health or safety are permitted on the fields during games. Take a look at this link to *Fifteen Things to Keep in Mind While Watching from the Sidelines*:

<http://www.gaasa.org/ftpfiles/Sidelines.pdf>

Be aware of the conversation on the ride home

When speaking with your child after games, it's always important to emphasize what they did well first. Ask them what they thought about the game and what was most fun. Next, ask them what they think they can improve on individually and as a team. How can they work on these skills? Try to avoid being overly critical and negative. Players burn out easily when they lose their love of the game; unfortunately parents often unknowingly contribute to this by applying excessive negative pressure. **Be proud of your child and let them know it while encouraging continued hard work.** The *Positive Coaching Alliance* has a lot of great resources to guide parents of young athletes on their website:

<http://www.positivecoach.org/parents/>

Grand Ave.

