

Here are six things to keep in mind when attending your child's game...

1. Avoid 'coaching' from the sideline while watching your child's game

A common problem in youth soccer is the impulse parents have to shout instructions to their young player from the sideline.

2. Do not criticize the referee

This is an epidemic, and spectators should realize that referees are people and will make mistakes — even those officiating at the highest levels of play. When parents go after a referee for what they perceive as a mistake, it begins to make the game about the adults rather than the kids.

3. Focus on the benefits of the game rather than the score

Far too often parents worry about the numbers formed by illuminated lights on a scoreboard rather than the experience their child has while playing youth sports. While it's natural for everyone to want to win, parents need to keep focus on the larger picture.

4. Think when interacting with opposing fans

This is one that should be common sense. Grown adults should be able to go and enjoy their child's experience without having any confrontation. Don't forget, you're not just representing a club, you're representing your child.

5. Don't stress out over the game

Do you find yourself pacing up and down the sideline — anxiously following the action as it unfolds on the field. Stop it. Breathe.

6. Save issues with the coach for the next day

Maybe you don't agree with how much your child played in a game or another decision the coach made during the match. It's important to take some time to think about it rather than confronting the coach in front of your child and the team.