

Coach Management Secrets
Leading Your "Off the Field" Team to Success
aka "You are In Charge, So Take Charge!"
presented by Kymberly Williams-Evans, U14G Administrator

Do you want to have

- ★ full involvement from parents?
- ★ great organization that takes minimal effort from you to run once the season is underway?
- ★ positive parents on the sidelines who refrain from harassing referees? who cheer appropriately for the players?
- ★ parents who support your efforts as coach?
- ★ parents who leave the coaching to you while handling the other roles?
- ★ families who value practices?

Yes, you can achieve this dream no matter the team if you apply some practical tips and strong leadership.

Before You Meet

1. Set expectations early - involvement, tone, rules
2. Plan a beginning and end of season party - bare minimums for cohesion
3. Sample Intro Email attached

Getting to Know Each Other - An Organized Team Meeting Can Make the Rest of the Season Easy

1. offer an organized team meeting
2. have a prepared agenda
3. create blanks with a space for EVERY family to sign up
4. have ice breakers for parents and players
5. set a goal to have parents know each other - happier sidelines
6. create competition between parents and players
7. delegate

Wanting to Keep Knowing You - Communication

1. train parents to use the website
2. update your website weekly
3. use the group email
4. send blurbs pre-and post-practice
5. insist on notification regarding attendance
6. follow-up asking about every missed practice and game
7. offer appreciation and recognition often
8. name names
9. communicate with and use a valuable resource -- your administrator

III. Practice Sites and Times: 4:00-5:30, Mondays and Thursday--Goleta Valley Junior High and La Colina - which day occurs where to be determined. We start practices Aug 28 as I am gone Aug 19-25. However, we may have a Sunday Aug 27 scrimmage as another team has already thrown down the gauntlet.

IV. You can help me coach your daughter if you:

- **Send your daughter with a water bottle to games and practices**
- **Get to practice on time or let me know when to expect your daughter**
- **Have your daughter bring a ball to every practice**
- Pick up your child promptly from practice
- Remind your daughter to wear shin guards under socks to every practice and game
- Please call me if your child is going to miss a practice;
- Please let me know directly if you have any issues or questions regarding my coaching of your daughter, soccer in general, etc.

V. Logistical Details

- Get Referee Volunteer Forms
- Sign two registration forms
- Note that games start Sept 9; we will have some Sunday games. No games Oct 7
- Jerseys

VI. Helpful Websites

- ☆ <http://r122.webyouthsoccer.com> -- Check here for a team roster, a season calendar, the schedule (due a few days prior to Sept 9), messages from me, referee tracking info
- ☆ <http://www.section10.org/>
- ☆ <http://soccer.org/>
- ☆ <http://www.ayso-santabarbara.org/>

VII. About Me

Thank you for entrusting your daughter to my coaching care for the next 3 months (or so). If you wonder about my experience/qualifications (besides the important “willing to volunteer” criteria) here goes:

First, dispel any rumors that I play decently these days. Your daughters and mine are far better than I ever was. I am the Academic Advisor for the UCSB Fitness instruction Minor (I train students who wish to become fitness professionals). And I run the UCSB on-campus fitness program. My PhD work (ABD) is in English, which helps me write emails to soccer families. My English is supreme; my German fluent; my French overly academic; and my Spanish mediocre. When not busy with fitness I lead Business English and Business Writing seminars for organizations and invest in real estate. Ok, I really spend most of my spare moments doing soccer and real estate stuff. Don't we all live for each practice and game? My daughter, Karina is an only child and freshman at DPHS where my husband, Bob teaches science. So Karina is entering the school where her dad teaches. Go easy on her!

My Soccer Experience

- Coached 10 seasons – children from U6 through U14 divisions
- Intermediate Level Coaching Certified
- Coached three all-star teams - U10G twice and U14G
- Played for 13 years, starting at 13 years old on the first South Bay AYSO girls' team
- Played at UCSB—JV and Intramurals
- Played in SB and LA Adult Leagues
- Played one season on a NON-professional team in Berlin, Germany
- Serve as AYSO Board Member 2001-present
- Intermediate Level Referee

Season Expectations

These guidelines, adaptations, and excerpts are from **Positive Coaching: Building Character and Self-Esteem Through Sports** by Jim Thompson, the founder and leader of the Positive Coaching Alliance.

Positive Coaches are "Double-Goal" Coaches (they 1-strive to win *AND* 2-teach life lessons). As the coach, some of my goals include:

1. Modeling "Honoring the Game" in behavior and language, especially when the official makes a "bad" call against our team.
2. Telling the players I expect them to Honor the Game regardless of what the other team does.
3. Supporting the officials, especially if parents yell at them. Rely on our team parents to Honor the Game even if the official makes a bad call.

As a parent, you have a much more important responsibility. Your job revolves around the second goal (making sure your child draws from the sports experience the lessons that will help her to become a successful, contributing adult). And while this is not easy given the seductive nature of the first goal, it can make all the difference in your child's life. A win-at-all-cost parent might look on his child striking out with the bases loaded to end the game as a tragedy. But as a Second-Goal Parent, you see the silver lining. This is an opportunity to encourage your child to develop resilience! Failure on the athletic field becomes a teachable moment for life lessons, *if* you play your crucial role, the role of the Second-Goal Parent.

An important reason your family is part of this all star team is because you are people who "Honor the Game." Honoring the Game involves respect for the Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates and one's Self. We will not bend the rules to win. We understand that a worthy opponent is a gift that forces our daughters to play to their highest potential. We all show respect for officials even when we disagree. We refuse to do anything that embarrasses our team. We will live up to our own standards even if others don't.

You can help your athlete in the following ways:

1. **Fill Your Child's Emotional Tank:** Perhaps the most important thing you can do is to be there for your child. Competitive sports are stressful to players and the last thing they need is a critic at home. Be a cheerleader for your child. Focus on the positive things she is doing and leave the correcting of mistakes to the coach. Let her know you support her without reservation regardless of how well she plays.

2. **Fill the Emotional Tanks of the Entire Team:** Cheer for all of the players on the team. Tell each of them when you see them doing something well.

3. **Encourage Other Parents to Honor the Game:** Show respect for the other team or the officials. But more than that, encourage other parents to also Honor the Game. If a parent of a player on your team begins to berate the official, gently say to them, "Hey, that's not honoring the Game. That's not the way we do things here."

4. **Don't Put the Player in the Middle:** Imagine a situation around the dinner table, in which a child's parents complain in front of her about how poorly her math teacher is teaching fractions. How would this impact this student's motivation to work hard to learn fractions? How would it affect her love of mathematics? While this may seem farfetched, when we move away from school to youth sports, it is all too common for parents to share their disapproval of a coach with their children. This puts a young athlete in a bind. Divided loyalties do not make it easy for a child to do her best. Conversely, when parents support a coach, it is that much easier for the child to put her wholehearted effort into learning to play well. If you think your child's coach is not handling a situation well, do not tell that to the player. Rather, seek a meeting with the coach in which you can talk with her about it.

5. **Don't Give Instructions During a Game or Practice:** You are not one of the coaches; so do not give your child instructions about how to play. It can be very confusing for a child to hear someone other than the coach yelling out instructions during a game. As in #4 above, if you have an idea for a tactic, go to the coach and offer it to him. Then let him decide whether he is going to use it or not. If he decides not to use it, let it be. Getting to decide those things is one of the privileges he has earned by making the commitment to coach.

SAMPLE INTRO EMAIL

Hello parents of the girls on my upcoming U14 soccer team. While we all know that your daughters are the focus and main source of fun and delight on a team, great families can turn a good experience into a fantastic one! I am looking forward to coaching your girls, meeting you and them, and having a cohesive, memorable, fantastic season. While I know half of the girls on the team, the other half will be surprises.

Rosters are released on the website as of tonight. Please go to r122.webyouthsoccer.com and log in so you can access the team roster. I will communicate often via that website so do check it regularly from now on. The practice times are listed there now. (Gotta go to the site to find out...).

What to expect in the next two weeks:

- 1) a team meeting that involves the girls and you
- 2) one or two practices at most - we can officially start after Aug 15, but I am gone Aug 11-13, then again Aug 19-25. Next week will have some team action - either emails, a meeting, or a practice.
- 3) no info on team jersey colors
- 4) a call to volunteer - EVERYONE on my teams participates, including parents. Hone your resume now, as you will all have the chance to step up and support your daughter, this team, and AYSO in some capacity!

What to expect over the season:

- 1) a wonderful, true coup of an assistant in Sean Mason. Your daughters will reap the value of a high level (Advanced!!) referee, experienced assistant, and overall nice parent
- 2) several refs with oodles of experience, dedication and great attitudes - Jim Caldwell (also a board member), Alex Koper, Paul and Tomi Topinko -- whoo hoo - two in one family, although let's not overwork them!, and a parent from the Rose, Klapp, and Guthrie families (sorry not to know which parent at this time). Sean and I are also refs, but we'd hate to hog all the whistle and flag waving ref glory.
- 3) lots of coaching knowledge and experience from others of our families. Although I am coaching this particular team, we have several past and current coaches in our ranks from the X, Y, and Z families. You are all welcome to share your experience and help at practices. And you are encouraged to leave all the cares and worries of a coach behind on game days. Wear the cheering parent hat and have fun!
- 4) loads of emails with practice and game details.

For now please start thinking whether you plan to ref, manage the team, handle snacks, handle organization of parties (yes, plural "parties" - we can certainly find time for two or three parties and two or three different families to host them), supply water and ice to games and practices, make or coordinate our team banner, serve as team photographer - as you see, more than enough volunteer activities to go around.

Yours in soccer fever pitch (soccer diehards will get the pun),
Kymberly Williams-Evans, MA