

The Role of Parents in Player Development

Recently we have been faced with a tremendous responsibility to teach the skills and tactics of the game to players while trying to avoid focusing on wins and losses. At NYS, like many other local and national soccer clubs it has created a difficult position for coaches to stick to a coaching philosophy. While we clearly define recreational soccer is for “fun” and travel soccer is “competitive” or “about winning” we cannot lose sight of, in either group, the development of players.

As parents we all want our kids to experience the wonderful emotion of winning. However, as parents we play an influential role in creating an understanding of player development. This system is not only created in the practice sessions, but is furthered at home and in the backyard. The acquisition of skill and technique must be stressed and it's through the positive reinforcement of parents that it can be achieved.

A Few Suggestions for Parents Regarding Player Development

1. Watch your child's practice and ask what his/her team is working on. If possible take them to a park or yard to work on their footskills or to a wall and practice receiving the ball off the wall.
2. Be positive even if their team is struggling. Everybody knows they make a mistake. Support them as they commit to improving
3. Avoid disagreeing with officials and especially coaches. At NYS the coaching staff is a dedicated group of volunteers, who we are fortunate to have. Children sense negativity, focus on being a positive team supporter.

Success does not always equate to a win on the field nor does winning represent a team or individual performing at their highest level. If your child takes a player on 1v1 and gets by, let's applaud that. When your team makes 3 passes in a row and keeps possession, that's great!! Understanding these nuances of soccer demonstrates that we are savvy and know the game.

When we celebrate the efforts of the youngest kids we are giving them a positive connection to the game we all love.

Hope to see you all soon!!

Mike LeGates