



'Providing a Fun and Safe Environment for Children to Learn to Play Football'

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## Creating the environment so we can all enjoy the game

Football is the greatest game in the world. It is played by more people across the globe than any other sport. For a privileged few, it is how they earn a living. But for the vast majority of people who play the game, it is a fun, leisure activity for all ages, to be enjoyed. We can all help our children enjoy the game more, by creating the right environment. By allowing them to play with freedom. By letting them make mistakes. By encouraging them to make their own decisions. We can simply **#LetThemPlay**

## Good Practice

- ✓ Issue a Code of Conduct to everyone involved at the start of the season.
- ✓ Whatever your role – coach, parent, player, referee – turn up in good time.
- ✓ All players play a minimum 50%.
- ✓ Coaches to stay in the technical area, unless a player is injured.
- ✓ Spectators behind the barrier on the opposite side of the field.
- ✓ Applause for good play for BOTH teams.
- ✓ Only the coach to issue instructions to the players.
- ✓ Respect Handshake before the game.
- ✓ Handshakes all round after the game – regardless of the score.
- ✗ No spectators behind the goals.
- ✗ No shouting at the referee.

## Respect

If we do not have Respect for the opposition players and coaches, and especially for the referee, then we do not have a game of football.

- ✓ Support and encourage players.
- ✓ Treat the opposition how you would like to be treated.
- ✓ Let the coaches coach.
- ✓ Remember that the referee may be learning the game.
- ✓ You are a role model to children at all times during the game.
- ✓ Applause for both sides.
- ✓ Make the game fun at all times.
- ✗ Do not encroach onto the pitch.
- ✗ No angry postmortems after the game.

## Match day best practice for coaches

Every coach at every level can play a huge part in creating the match day environment that everyone can enjoy, not only the players, but the match officials and those watching too. A good coach can be a positive role model that youngsters will remember for the rest of their lives.

There are lots of different ways you can create that positive environment.

Here are just a few:

- You could take the pressure off yourself and give players ownership for choosing the formation and the team.
- All players getting at least half the available game time is a great way to create good team spirit. You could plan your substitutions before the game.
- The score line is only one way to measure development. You could set team and individual player targets.
- Some coaches think they are not involved unless they continually offer instruction. But instead of doing a running commentary throughout the game, let the players make decisions, allow them to make mistakes and learn from them.
- Advanced technical coaching terms can confuse young players. Try to use appropriate language.
- Instead of getting anxious and uptight on match day, try and relax and enjoy it. Remember don't shout at match officials, children could copy your behaviour.
- Reward effort rather than just ability.
- No one enjoys it when a game ends with an angry post mortem. You could save your feedback until training night. Always try and be constructive whatever the result.

These players are starting on their football journey, remember how much you enjoy the game and pass it on to them!

## Match day best practice for parents

Whether you played yourself, or if you are new to football, the game is a great activity that can be enjoyed by all the family.

Kids love playing, and they like their parents to take an interest. What they don't like is when mums and dads get too involved from the touchline, or put too much pressure on them to do well.

- ✓ Do offer praise, encouragement and applause – for both sides.
- ✓ Do stand in the designated area for spectators.
- ✓ Praise for effort and attitude not just talent.
- ✓ Focus on the process not the result.
- ✓ Focus on your child's enjoyment.
- ✗ Don't issue instructions from the touchline.
- ✗ Don't follow your son/daughter up and down the touchline.
- ✗ Avoid pressuring your child about winning or losing.