

How Will my Players Remember Me?

The Making of Life-Long Soccer Players/Participants

It is my desire to have a positive, constructive, life-long impact on the players I coach. I want my players to leave me with a love of the game but also a respect for each other, our opponents and those adults that help make it all happen. I want my players to acknowledge and thank the opposition, coaches, parents, referees and others involved because they understand the importance of doing so and not because I told them to do it. These life-lessons and values of appreciation and thankfulness will stick with my players throughout their lives with whichever path they take.

I want all of my players to be life-long soccer players and participants. They may not all grow to be the next D1 athlete or national team player. In fact, I know that the vast majority, if not all, will not. But, instead, I want my players to leave me loving the game and always desiring to come back for more. This can be at training, at games, at tournaments or at the end of the season. After their competitive playing career is over, I want my players to want to coach and play recreationally as much as they can. I never want to be the reason any of my players quit playing the game I love.

Coaching at the competitive premier youth level, I will always strive to bring appropriate competition to the forefront. I want my players to compete at a level that brings them the most success and enjoyment. I will measure our teams' success not necessarily by wins and losses, but by the progressions they have made in development as individuals and a team. We will set, as a team, goals before each season and strive to attain them. We will revisit these goals throughout the year and discuss, as a team, where we are, what needs to be adjusted, and what else we can do to make our team better together.

I desire to be a player-centric coach. I want my players to control the team and me to be a facilitator to helping them get better. Decisions they make will stick far better than decisions I make. This goes for game day as well. I believe a coach should, for the most part, be quiet during the majority of the game only interjecting when a positive impact or an obvious adjustment needs to be made. I will always be a strong proponent of the kids learning through the successes they have and mistakes they make. The game is the best teacher and the kids need to problem solve and make decisions during the game without adults, both parents and/or coaches yelling the answer to them.

I remember a coach, Mr. John Napier, from my very early days in playing this great game. I do not remember all he told me, whether he had great lesson plans, whether he talked too much or used too many cones. What I do remember is I ALWAYS had a great time and I ALWAYS wanted to go back for more. It is this love of the game he instilled in me that led me to play at a high level and now coach as a career. Every day when I head to training, every week when I head to games, and every year when I begin it all again I will always ask myself one simple question: "How will my players remember me?"

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