



TAKE A SEAT COACH, *PLEASE!*

During the week and on Saturdays I have the opportunity to walk the fields used by our SNSA youth league teams and watch a lot of good soccer from players of all ages. This past Saturday I was walking around talking to people and watching, when I stopped and observed a U-7 girls game for 10 minutes. While I was talking to a friend on the side, I watched the coach of one of the teams come unglued, jumping 3 feet off the ground, waving his arms in the air with clenched fists, veins popping out of his neck. His demanding voice could be heard from anywhere in the park. As I walked around the field, some of the parents on his team were questioning why they were there, and the parents on the opposite sideline were commenting that they were glad that their children were not on that team.

Now I grew up in the 1960'S and 1970's in southern California and played and watched a lot of sports. I had always looked up to the coaches of my favorite teams as they yelled and threw fits on the sidelines – I thought that's how coaches were supposed to act. After a long time in the military, I moved my family to Las Vegas and started coaching my kids' teams. When I first started coaching, I mirrored some of the behavior that I had observed in my youth. Then one day I was coaching my youngest son, and we had a bad day. After the game my son said to me, "Dad, you are my best coach AND my worst coach". These innocent words made me realize that it was time to make a decision...to quit coaching, or to change my behavior!

During the next ten years, while attending a variety of soccer coaching courses, clinics and conventions, I learned a few things:

- Do your coaching at your practices.
- Let your players play the game ("TAKE A SEAT COACH").
- Give your players the opportunity to experience free and creative play with a little motivation and a lot less instruction.
- If you have fun, so will your players.

See you at the fields!

Coach John

John Saft is a Field Supervisor and Coach Mentor with Southern Nevada Soccer Association. He has coached youth soccer at both recreational and competitive levels for over 30 years. He holds USSF D and NSCAA National coaching licenses.