



# ARIZONA SPORTS COMPLEX NEWSLETTER

I can remember being a Dad at one of my children's youth soccer games and getting kicked out of a game for going at referee, because I thought he was making bad calls. At that time, I felt I was justified, but in looking how my child reacted was enough for me to change my ways. Now that was many years ago and with all the Coaching Course, Certifications, and Development classes I have taken, they all share the same message when it come to this subject. We have to realize that when it comes to youth soccer, we are all developing our children by the example we set. So please, take the time to read this article that I want to share with you.

## Youth Soccer Referees Need Support – Not Harassment.

- “Are you blind!!”
- “Blow your whistle!!”
- “Open your eyes!!”
- “You need glasses!!”
- “Come on, ref!”
- “What are you doing?!”
- “Call it both ways!!”



Do these phrases sound familiar? I know they do to me, or if you're a parent trying to enjoy your child's soccer game on Soccer Saturday. (The last one is my favorite, since it makes no sense at all — referees are not obligated to make an even number of calls for both teams — if only one team commits fouls, then only that team should get called for them.)

All of this yelling and complaining at referees is hurting the development of our kids. More than we realize.

Part of the problem is that we see people do it on television, or it gets glorified in movies. We think it's part of our jobs as coaches and parents to give the referee a hard time. Sometimes, at the highest level, there is an appropriate time to hold referees accountable. But Saturday afternoons at the local U10 league is not the highest level. Our most important job at the youth level is not to win or replicate what we see the professional coaches do. Our job is to provide a positive experience and develop young kids.

Unfortunately, however, we often find ourselves complaining to referees almost every game, and it directly affects our kids in a most negative way. Here are 4 ways yelling at referees hurts our kids:

### They Learn That Mistakes Are Not Okay

More often than not, the referees are also young adults — they're still considered youth, even though they may be teenagers. They are — just like the players — there to learn and grow. They are going to make mistakes. If we complain or yell at the referee every time he or she makes a poor call, we teach our children that making mistakes is not okay. Our kids learn to be afraid to fail, and likely end up not trying at all to avoid messing up. The young referee will likely quit, and the children playing will see the actions of their parents and coaches, then be afraid to try something new as players out of fear of “blowing the game.” This lesson, of course, extends to the rest of our children's lives, and they will learn to be afraid of taking chances in all endeavors.

### **They Learn To Make Excuses**

Blaming the referee is an excuse. Our teams are going to get bad results sometimes. And seldom, a draw may very well turn into a loss because of a misjudged call from a referee. However, we can only control our own efforts, actions, and responses. If we complain about and blame the referee, our kids will begin to blame their poor results and performances on the referee. They make an excuse for why they were not successful.

If we want to develop resilient and mentally strong children, we need to teach them to take responsibility for their actions. Instead of blaming the official, we ought to score so many more goals than the opponent that a wrongly-awarded penalty kick has no effect on the result. Or better yet, we should fix the mistakes that caused the ball to enter the penalty area in the first place — dominate play to an extent that the ball never escapes our attacking half. Surely, these are very difficult to do. But we need to teach our kids to not blame others for their results and learn to overcome any obstacles that enter their path. Otherwise, our children will be blaming others for anything and everything that goes wrong in their lives, and they will never be as successful as they otherwise could be.

### **They Learn To Give Up When Facing Adversity**

Bad calls by referees are inevitable, and there is nothing we can do to change that. Our kids need to learn to realize this. We cannot control the referee's actions. However, we can control how we respond to situations. Our players need to learn how to press on when given a difficult situation and do everything in their power (such as their effort, actions, and attitudes) to overcome it. If we simply complain to the referee and get stuck on yelling at them, we do not focus on controlling ourselves in a positive, productive way. Our kids will get stuck on complaining or worrying about the bad situation rather than focusing on how they are going to succeed despite the circumstances. Life is going to give our kids a number of difficult scenarios. If we don't teach them how to brush off what they can't control and focus on how they can overcome adversity, our kids will forever struggle in life.

### **They Learn To Disrespect Authority**

This is one of the most ironic situations when it comes to adults complaining to referees. We often complain about kids having no respect and a disregard for authority. However, as soon as the referee — the person in charge of a match — makes a poor call, we complain and yell. How do we expect our kids to learn to respect authority if we don't show that very same respect ourselves? As parents and coaches, we are undermining our own authority by teaching kids to be disrespectful.

As always, it is important to realize how our actions affect our children, and how the way we approach the youth soccer experience affects the lessons our children learn. Whether we realize it or not, like it or not, how we act and what we teach our children through sport affects them in all areas of their lives. Our interactions with referees is no different.

Is there ever an appropriate time to hold the referee accountable? Certainly. But there is a productive, positive way to do it, and there is a negative, destructive way. Instead of yelling or complaining, the coach (NOT the parents) should calmly speak to the ref at half time or off to the side. This teaches our kids how to handle situations in a civil, professional manner. In youth soccer, it is important to remember that no one is intentionally trying to make bad calls or make the game one-sided. Believe me, referees have more important things to worry about than fixing the result of a local youth match.

I know we can all do better... so, lets continue to be the example and not the exception in showing our kids better ways to handle these situations.

We also want to take a moment to congratulate last week's Character Card Winners! Great Job to all the players!

⚽ U8 Age Group

- W. Bagne
- G. Davis
- Q. Ortiz
- G. Otjen

⚽ U10 Age Group

- T. Giliman
- A. Otjen

⚽ U12 Age Group

- S. Dumanski
- D. Chawen

⚽ U14 Age Group

- K. Giliman
- R. Miller

Please stop by the front desk to pick it up your prize next time you're here.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and have a great weekend!

Respectfully,

George Archuleta

ASC Director Youth Soccer

George@arizonasportscomplex.com