



# ARIZONA SPORTS COMPLEX NEWSLETTER

Winning can't be the only result

I have been to many coaching seminars and when you get a bunch of us together with a combination of sports scientists and psychologists, you count on us not agreeing on much. There will be one thing though that we would agree on, and that is the overemphasis on winning and competition, instead of practice and development. This very mindset has been detrimental to the long term performance of our young athletes.

I have seen so many youth sports programs become so results oriented, that ends up serving an environment and not serving the long term player development. It also doesn't serve the long term personal development of our athletes. The child is asked after game "did you win" instead of "did you have fun and enjoy yourself?", is one of the factors that is causing our young athletes to dropout across all sports.

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The most common question that is asked by parents "how do we get our coach to understand that the result does not matter, and kids will quit if they don't get to play, or get berated because they lost or made an error?"

Trust me, as a Director of this Youth Sports Program....I hear you.

In working on changing and developing a culture that our young athletes can develop and thrive in, we must play to a higher purpose. One takes the focus off of today's result, much of which may be out of an athlete's control, and places it on things they can control, and things that serve them long term.



It is vital that we work with our athletes to play and train for a higher purpose than winning. Now the big question is how do we do this? This was a question I really struggled with.

- How can our teams take the field daily with a focus that goes beyond the final score?
- How can we as coaches guide their players in a way that will benefit them in their long term development, but might not benefit them today?
- How we as parents find a way to not get so caught up in today's score, and help their children measure progress and development, instead of simply "did you win?"

I felt that this can be done with constant communication, open door policy with parent, players and coaches, and a solid soccer curriculum and philosophy. But there has to be more... then I read this about Willie Cromack, a soccer coach from Vancouver and I want to share it with you all.

Cromack is a former collegiate soccer player who left the game after college to run the family bike shop. During his time at the shop he became heavily involved in charity bike rides, raising money and awareness for everything from cancer to education to the homeless.

Cromack noticed something about the participants in his charity rides. They were motivated by a higher purpose that gave them the energy and motivation to complete daunting rides. They focused on a purpose much higher than winning the race, such as raising money by completing a feat of endurance and perseverance. Most importantly, simply by completing their goal, they won!

These bikers had a purpose much higher than winning, which each of them was in control of achieving. Upon completion of their events, what Cromack saw was a pride in accomplishment, in the completion of a journey, in the fulfillment of a dream, regardless if they finished first or last. He shared that, "this experience showed him the trials that people would go through to make a difference on the planet and for people they loved."

Then Cromack thought "why can't we do this with my youth soccer team?"

You see Cromack, like all youth coaches, took the field each and every week preaching technical play, such as passing out of the back, or playing to feet instead of just kicking the ball away. He challenged players to take players 1v1, instead of getting rid of it. And as he did this, his team lost games. They lost to teams that kicked it over the top to the fast kid. They lost to teams that had their goalkeeper kick the ball as far forward as possible, instead of rolling it to a defender and trying to play. They lost to teams that were more concerned with today's result than the development of a future player.

Inevitably, like most youth coaches Cromack struggled to convince his team parents to be patient, and that losing by playing the right way would eventually lead to wins down the road. He struggled to convince opposing coaches of the need to teach and play the game correctly, and that the scoreboard meant little in the long term. He needed a way to play to a purpose higher than winning, and help his team and their parents understand how to do that. So he focused on the right goals.

By setting technical goals, such as completing 100 passes or playing back to the goalkeeper 20 times, Cromack's team started playing better without ever speaking about winning. "Players know what they are aiming for and while the technical goals are there, the idea of attempting to win the game is never taken away. Winning simply finds its rightful place in their brains; important, but not more important than the world and their own development."

Setting technical and development goals becomes more enjoyable and challenging for players and coaches. It challenges coach because it makes them reflect on what is important. Developing technical, thoughtful players is actually much harder than utilizing a few athletes and playing for a win, especially at the younger ages. Coaches must teach and help their players reach measurable, technical goals. Every player matters, and they all must contribute to achieve their goals. Says Cromack, "Everybody needs to be at their best to make the most difference."

"In short," says Cromack, "players can focus on the fun and improvement. Coaches can focus on teaching. Parents can focus on support. Everything moves back to equilibrium and where sport should be."

This is the philosophy that we push and develop here at our Youth Soccer Program with our Coaching Staff and I wanted to take time to share it with you. I look forward to a great session and your child having a great experience here at ASC.

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

🏆 D. Rood U8 Coach Sal Impact

🏆 J. Spicer U8 Coach Marco Dynamo

🏆 A. Wilson U10 Coach Marco Real Betis

🏆 L. Barno U10 Coach Brenna Barcelona

🏆 R. Vunna U12 Coach Matt Aston Villa

🏆 R. Senthil U12 Coach Matt Aston Villa

🏆 J. Greeley U14 Coach Ayana Verona

🏆 R. Miller U14 Coach Marco Sampdoria

If you didn't get your prize, please stop by the front desk to pick it up next time you're here.

Thank you for taking the time to read our weekly newsletters.

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