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THE PRESIDENT
OF MSA

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COACH

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From the President

Tim McCann

The subject you brought up concerning can a player stand in the goal has been the subject of much controversy. In the past we tried to have referees attempt to enforce kids not standing in the goal but it became a matter of judgment. What constitutes being in the goal? What if the ball is only six feet from the goal? What if it is 45 feet? We ultimately eliminated any language other than we don't have goalkeepers. Having someone stand in the goal does not make them a goalkeeper as by definition a goal keeper can use their hands.

Now, I will agree with you that it violates the spirit of 3v3 to have a child stand in the goal. One of the reasons 3v3 works so well is that we can teach triangles. If a person is standing in the goal the triangle gets stretched way out of shape when the play is at the other end of the field. So, ultimately it is bad coaching and will come back to haunt them. There is nothing wrong with keeping a kid back as a defender, in fact, that is what makes the back part of the triangle. However, at U5 and U6

kids have a difficult concept of what is the proper space and if you tell them to get back they are likely to go all the way back to the goal. They should be encouraged to come out of the goal and participate. It is a delicate balance that must be learned. The cognitive ability of some of the kids at this age will be that some will get it quicker than others. The other thing is how it is being coached.

We should not have kids coached to go stand in the goal when the ball is far downfield. If a coach is coaching children to actually stand in the goal when play is at the other end of the field, then they should be counseled. Keep in mind that during a break-a-way, you want the defenders to go to goal so it is difficult to teach properly.

Your coaching should be to have fun, teach the fundamentals of the game, help the

kids keep their self-esteem high, and teach them a love for the game. Winning is not an issue at this age.

I would like you to keep in mind that sometimes it is difficult to teach them to be a defender without having them be in the goal too much. It is sometimes a difficult balance.

I would like to make another comment about the 3v3 play. All you really need to do is go watch a game in Arlington where they play 6v6 with a keeper. Very few kids ever get to touch the ball and certainly never in the open. It is just bunch ball. I have two children on my U5 team who played U5 in Arlington last year. They cannot believe the difference. Also when we take U7's to tournaments, they seem to be much better than the other associations that have not embraced small-sided soccer. Our kids are developing faster.

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance or answer any other questions.

Tim McCann
President, MSA



Article originally published March 2006



Letter from a Volunteer Coach

**"It's Hard
to beat
someone
who never
quits"**

"Today I heard a comment made about me behind my back. I started to turn around and look, but then decided better of it and kept my eyes on the field. My wife hears things like this more often than I do, because many of you don't know who she is. She tells me what you say. I have received angry emails full of suggestions about who should be playing where and how I lost that days game for the kids. I thought I'd write an open letter to all of you parents even though I might never send it. I'll start it this way. I am a volunteer. I'm the one who answered the call when the club said they didn't have enough coaches or managers. I understand that you were too busy. I have some news for you, I'm not retired I'm busy too. I have other children and a job just like you do. Not only do I not get paid to do this, it costs me money. I see you walk up to the game 15 minutes after it started, still dressed for your work. Do you know I've already been here over an hour? Imagine if you had to leave work early nearly every day. I've never seen you at training. I'm sure you're plugging away at the office. But I'm out here on the field trying my best to teach these children how to play a sport they love, while my bank account suffers.

I know, I make mistakes. In fact maybe I'm not even that great of a coach but I treat the kids fairly and with respect. I am pretty sure they like coming to

my training and games. Without me or someone like me, there'd be no team for them to play on. I'm part of this community too and it's no picnic being out here on this stage like this. It's a lot easier back there with the other parents where no one is second – guessing you. I also know you think I give my son or daughter unfair advantages. I try not to, in fact, have you ever considered that maybe I'm harder on him than on the others? I'm sure he hears plenty of criticism at school from classmates, who hear it from you at home about how poor a manager I am. If even unconsciously, my kids are getting a slight advantage because I know them better and trust their abilities. Is it the worst thing in the world, considering the sacrifice I'm making? Trust me, I want to win too. I like to think I treat everyone equally; yes even the weaker players get a chance. After all, in my eyes it's all about inclusion.

After this game is over, I'll be the last one to leave. I have to clear the pitch, put away all the equipment and make sure everyone has had a parent arrive to pick them up. There have been evenings when my son and I waited with a player until after dark before someone came to get them. Many nights I'm sure you've already had dinner and are relaxing on the couch by the time I finally kick the mud off my shoes and climb into my car, which hasn't been washed or vacuumed for

weeks. Why bother cleaning it during the season? Do you know how nice it would be if, just once after a game, one of you offered to carry the heavy gear bag to my car or help collect the balls, bib or bottles? If I sound angry, I'm not. I do this because I love it and I love being around the kids. There are plenty of rewards and I remind myself that while you're at the office working, your kid is saying something that makes us all laugh or brings a tear to my eye. The positives outweigh the negatives. I just wish sometime those who don't choose to volunteer their time would leave the coaching to the few of us who do"



westport united
3 hrs -

Coaching Director

The Most Important Skills To Teach

Soccer players need a lot of different skills, and it does not matter for most of these skills whether you teach Skill A or Skill B first. However, there are some skills that are absolute "must-haves" for any player and are so important that you probably will want to teach them first.

These are basic **ball-holding skills** (receiving and shielding);

basic ball-stealing skills (defense); and **basic take-on skills** (attacking). Most kids naturally seem to have a few basic defensive skills, even if they were never formally taught. The other two areas require instruction to accomplish with even minimal competency, so there is a good argument to start first with ball-holding skills; move next to take-on skills; and then to get to ball-stealing skills.

Why ball-holding before take-on? Simple. Once you get possession, the other side is going to try to take the ball back. If you can hang onto the ball under pressure, you'll have time to make better decisions

(including finding an open teammate to pass the ball to). Also, if you are confident that you can hold the ball, you are much less likely to blindly try to simply whack it away and let someone else worry about it (a technique commonly known as "passing the responsibility rather than the ball" or the "hot-potato phenomenon"). What are ball-holding skills? Most folks refer to them as receiving and shielding skills. The first step (receiving) is to bring the ball under control quickly. Then, you use your body/legs to get between the opponent and the ball to protect (shield) the ball. It includes really basic stuff like simply stepping over the ball when somebody is coming in, as well as somewhat harder stuff (but still easy) like rolling/pulling the ball back behind you or to your side.

I WAS THAT GUY By: Chuck Smith U6-Boys

There are coaches and parents that mean harm. It is naïve to think differently but I cannot sleep at night thinking that number is not well less than 1% of us all. Given that, it means that 99% percent of us are well intentioned parents and coaches. I have always counted myself among the majority. I have not always been correct.

Passion is a volatile thing. It is hard to manage. Some have it in spades. Some have virtually none. For those of us that have it, sometimes it doesn't manifest itself in the most positive manner.

I WAS the guy that none of you want to be today.

Thankfully I learned to be a better parent and a better coach. Unfortunately, I didn't learn these lessons easily or in

the most positive way.

I started coaching in 1989. My first foray into coaching youth sports was reasonably successful where we won second place. Our only losses were to the undefeated champion. Our success was no doubt directly attributable to the Bobby Knight look-alike stomping up and down the sideline.

Years later I stumbled into soccer quite by accident. I ended up coaching my son's team of 4 & 5 year old dreamers. It was my goal to win every match and put all of these young stars on the national team. How would any other set of goals make any sense? Needless to say, we didn't go undefeated and I am fairly sure that none of them will ever play for the national team. Sadly, few of them still play soccer at all. I wonder how much of that fact can be attributed to my behavior?

I have coached too many soccer teams since to try and count. I

have been present as a parent countless more times. You could say that I was loud during these events. Loud is one thing, unproductive loud is another.

If some of our veteran MSA referees would tell you the truth, I am quite confident that they would say that drawing one of my matches was not something that appealed to them at all. I challenged virtually every decision made by the referee. Sometimes my disagreements were direct, sometimes they were more sarcastic. More than once I was asked to stop. Once I was even asked politely to leave. I wonder how many referees no longer serve in that capacity due to my verbal abuse?

If you could get some of my former parents and players to tell you the truth, I have no doubt that they would tell you that they changed teams or quit soccer altogether based partly on my sideline behavior and antics during training.

**"Hard
work
beats
talent
when
talent
doesn't
work
hard."**

Coaching Director

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"You Can't Score a Goal if you Don't take a shot"
Johan Crujff

The Most Important Skills To Teach

The rolling/pulling of the ball requires some work, as you need to learn to use both feet - and to switch feet. However, one of the key ingredients is to learn to bend the knees; get the arms out; and use your weight to push back into the opponent. As kids get more advanced, they can learn how to spring off of an opponent (or roll off of him by using a circle turn). However, at the very beginning stages, they are fine if they can simply get their bottoms down; get those knees bent; push hard back into the opponent; and get enough weight on their support leg to be able to free their far foot and use it to roll the ball around. Along with these ball-holding skills, you will want to introduce some basic receiving skills, so that they can bring the ball under control quickly (which is essential if they

are going to have any hope of shielding it). How to do this? Start with two equal-sized players with a single ball in a grid about 3-yards square and have them work on holding the ball by using simple rolls, pullbacks and other touches to shield the ball. If you teach your players ANYTHING, teach them the skills to keep possession. Once they realize that they have the skills to keep an opponent from stealing the ball, they will gain the confidence to lift their heads up and find another player to pass off to. Before they gain this confidence, you can expect terrible passing simply because they will get flustered at the first hint of pressure (and might even "feel" panicked at pressure which is 10-20 yards away). Until your players can

hold a ball 1v1 in a grid about 10 feet by 10 feet for a count of around 7-8, they are not going to have enough confidence to do very well on the field.

After learning some basic shielding/receiving skills, the next thing to learn is some basic dribbling skills. Different coaches have different philosophies on how to teach dribbling. Many coaches spend a lot of time trying to teach young players a lot of fancy moves which were made famous by noted international stars (who, incidentally, only perfected these fancy moves after years and years of hard work on the basics). This approach works for some kids who are naturally graceful and quick. However, it can have the unfortunate result of convincing an awful lot of kids that "I can't dribble" when they simply are still growing; are a bit clumsy; and cannot get their big feet and/or unwieldy bodies to do all of the ballerina stuff.

Read the whole article at :-
<http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dgraham/manual/>

Something I heard on the pitch this weekend

I had the opportunity to perform Board Member on Duty this past weekend Oct. 17th 2015 and I heard the most awesome coaching on field 4A. The team had white jersey's and

were sitting on the side closest to the concession stand. The coach was telling the players to clear the ball to the side. They didn't and the other

team scored. What I heard next is probably not un-common for MSA coaches but I was a witness to it this time. The coach started to complement the players for what they did like great hustle, way to get back,

you did great getting back on defense. Next time lets clear the ball to the side. He clapped and said lets go. He didn't make them feel worse by yelling at them about what they didn't do. Great job coach. This is what Mansfield Soccer is about. Thank you MSA coaches that exemplify this attitude.

I WAS THAT GUY

Continued from page 3

One parent told me directly, "I do not approve of your training techniques." He wasn't referring to the types of drills that we used.

If you could get some of our veteran board members to tell you the truth, they would likely say that a few private discussions were had relative to how much longer they would permit me to coach in this league. It is hard for me to imagine that our executive board didn't field complaints about me on a regular basis.

Worst of all, I am guilty of verbally abusing my own children. How hard is it to kick a soccer ball, shoot a basketball, and hit a baseball? I mean really, how do we get to the pros with you performing so poorly? When not said directly, it was clear to my own children how I felt. I am not proud of these facts but they are facts nonetheless.

I am a much different parent now. I like to believe that I am a better coach now, too. I am still one of the loudest voices at the complex but the things that I say are different.

One evening, near the end of a match, the referee ran up to me and said, "If I get a vote for coach of the year, you get it."

On the ride home after a JV soc-

cer match last year my eldest son chastised me for fussing at the referee. When he finished, he said to me, "I was surprised to hear you yell because you are usually the quietest parent at the game."

Vindication...

So why Am I different now?

Everyone has at least one seminal moment in their life. In terms of youth sports, I have had four. I learn slowly.

First, I started actually playing soccer. For those that have never tried, I suggest that you get out in the yard with your children. Oddly enough, moving a ball around with nothing but your feet is a rather difficult thing to do well. Who knew? It was a fairly enlightening experience for me.

Second, I decided to become a referee myself. I cannot say why? I was probably seeking more specific reasons to complain about how poor our referees perform on any given Saturday? Nothing is more humbling than being called a blind idiot. Well, maybe being accused of outright dishonesty...

I am going to share a "truth" and let you in on a little "secret" that no referee likes to admit. First,

we do not care who wins. Honest. Second, sometimes we make a mistake.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, my eldest son stopped in the middle of a match to inform me that he had heard enough from me. I don't recall his exact quote but the gist of it was simply, "Shut up!" He was ten. That will get your attention. Soccer is supposed to be fun for the kids, not for me.

After a particularly difficult loss and a poor post-match decision on my behalf, my assistant coach says to me, "You cannot speak to my son that way!" He was right, I was wrong. That young man no longer plays soccer. Enough said.

Our pastor has been presenting a series of sermons called, "The Power of Words." Regardless your faith, know this, your words do have power. Your actions do, too.

I was the guy that no referee wanted to work for and few players wanted to play for. I am now the guy that surprises his son when he's heard from the bleachers.

Which parent/coach do you want to be?

Referee Director

Referee Retention Program

Coaches and Parents,
Recently The North Texas Referee Committee instituted a referee retention program. You will see Flyers posted at the Sports Complex asking for YOUR HELP with the retention of our young referees.

The flyer makes use of the letters of the word REFEREE as the tenants of the program

Respect the young referee,
Encourage them with some praise, Forgive them if they get a call(s) wrong, Embolden them by thanking them, Remain kind if you think a call is incorrect, Elevate them with positive comments, Enjoy the game.

Between 40 - 45% of all

newly minted referees never complete their first season. When polled a few years ago the respondents said that their main reason for not returning was being yelled at and not being respected. Mansfield Soccer has a significantly higher retention rate (60%), which means that we (MSA) is doing something correct.

Before you yell at a young referee, envision your child as the referee. Then ask yourself if you would want someone yelling at your child. Each of them have attended a referee clinic and passed a test on the Laws of the Game. They will make mistakes, but for

the most part their opinion of what happened will have resulted in the correct decision.

This season you will see people in grey and yellow shirts with a Mentor patch on the left sleeve. They are senior referees who are giving back to help the newer referees. Please allow them to do their job as well as letting the referees do theirs.

Lastly, the MSA Referee Committee and the Board of Directors do not take the abuse of a referee lightly.

Dave Horn,
Referee Director/Lead Assignor

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This newsletter is sent to 1000+ members...its a great way to get your company's name out to our members. Sponsorship must be approved by the MSA executive board or MSA board.



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Office Hours

Monday-Morning	10:00am - 1:00 pm
Monday-Evening	5:00pm - 7:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00am - 1:00 pm
Wednesday	10:00pm - 1:00 pm
Thursday	10:00am - 1:00pm

We are about whole family fun not just the individual

www.mansfieldsoccer.org

Did you know that Mansfield Soccer has Academy and Select Teams?

For more information contact Mansfield Revolution

<http://www.mansfieldsoccer.org/MansfieldRevolution.aspx>

Women's World Cup Watch Party Pictures

