



## Working With The Team

Come to practices and games prepared. Both you and the players will enjoy the time more if you are ready. Remember that you cannot greatly affect the play during the course of the game. Rely instead on practices and quality pre-game preparation. As you observe your players, note where improvement is needed and then design practices to emphasize the needed skills.

- Before practices, organize tactics and techniques to be covered, field preparation, equipment, and small-sided games to work on needed skills. Develop a theme, such as improving defensive play.
- Before games, develop and discuss with players a pre-game plan, including the responsibilities and roles of each player.
- Stretch and warm-up to prepare the body for more vigorous activity.
- Cool down gradually after a vigorous workout.
- Motivate. Often the winning team is the one that most wants to win.
- Enjoy the game. It is a beautiful sport. And enjoy the team!

Unfortunately, our world is a dangerous place for children, and the soccer community must work to protect its players from adults who do not have the best intentions for coaching. With this in mind, here are five tips to insure that the vast majority of coaches do not become targets of improper conduct accusations:

1. Avoid being alone with players in non-public places.
2. Do not buy gifts or give money to players.
3. Let your language set the tone. Avoid profanity — even in conversations that you think are private but may be within earshot of players.
4. Never verbally demean, negatively label, or ridicule a child based on appearance, gender, weight, sexual orientation, race, or any other identifying characteristic.
5. Document unusual situations that may bring accusations of improper conduct against you and forward to your club president or league representative.