

How to Build Hunger and Desire in a Youth Soccer Team



You've Got to Want It! - (Photo: Flickr.com)

Soccer matches are often decided by which team “wants” to win more. That extra bit of motivation can be huge a boost when it comes to winning 50-50 balls and having that extra bit of energy to chase down the opposition and fight for the ball. Coaching this trait into your team is extremely vital if you want to have a team that wins week in and week out.

Coaching youngsters to play soccer can often be a very challenging endeavor. Although many aspiring soccer players love the game and fight hard to win the ball every moment, many of the children would rather be catching up on their Saturday morning cartoons or relaxing in front of the Nintendo. So how can a coach instill some fire and passion into the young soccer team? Here are some tips to get you started:

First off, soccer needs to be fun. A child’s life is dominated by pursuing activities that they find fun. This is why children are often found to get in trouble at school when they get “bored”, and why they love to play games in general. If you create a fun and happy atmosphere within your youth soccer squad, the kids will enjoy playing and that is step one to creating a powerful team.

Also, you will need to build positive reinforcement in players when they show a bit of urgency and fight. When someone is giving a huge effort in practice in a game, make sure to congratulate the player in front of the entire team so they can all see the example. When a player is enjoying the game and earning praise for such hard work and effort, they will have more desire to do this again and will fight harder for the team.

Another thing to focus on is coaching this ability into your team. One practice drill that is very good at this is to have two players start on a line. You punt the ball roughly twenty-five yards away and have the players race to the ball and try to win possession. The winner is the player who is able to cleanly pass the ball back to you. This drill not only forces players to focus on sprinting and ball control, but it brings an element of competition into your team and will help improve the fight in your players. Obviously you will need to keep an eye out in case a foul occurs in the process, as your team won’t improve if they simply foul everyone else. But, this drill includes an extremely important relevance to jostling for control of loose balls in a game.

Also, try to encourage your team to watch the English Premier League. The professional league is widely known as the most physical and intense soccer league on the planet, and you can see why if you watch these games. Tell your team to take note of how hungry all of the players are when they go in for the ball and fight over possession. Learning from the best will help your team become the best.

Therefore, make the game fun for your team, praise high effort, install some fitting drills into your practice, and have your players learn from the best. You will be sure to have a feisty and determined youth soccer squad by year’s end.