

How to Handle a Poor Call by a Referee in Youth Soccer



Stop whining! He's not changing the call! - (Photo: Theconversation.edu.au)

Terrible calls by a referee can greatly affect the outcome of any soccer game, and occur in every level of the sport. Even in the professional leagues, various managers are left fuming after the final whistle when the big penalty call or offside decision doesn't go their way, and in brutal fashion they are often correct in their view of the injustice. However, soccer can be a cruel game and dealing with such bad calls and how a coach deals with the problem goes a long way in how the team also will deal with the ref's call.

Here are couple things that a coach shouldn't do, no matter how badly you want! Don't start yelling at the referee. Youth refs are often amateurs as well and they will not respond professionally to an angry coach. They may decide to make even more calls against your side in a vindictive approach and this surely won't help your team. It simply amazes me how much soccer players and coaches complain to the refs in these situations. Do the calls ever get overturned? No.

Another thing you shouldn't do is get angry with the opposing coach or players. Yes, their coach's smug smile after someone dived to steal a penalty kick will send passion and anger spiraling through your nerves, but having a go at an opposing coach will do little to help alleviate the problem.

The main cause for concern with general complaints by coaches is that you are a role model for your players. When you as coach blame a loss on a referee's decision, your youth soccer players will too. Placing blame upon outside factors limits one's ability to look inwards and accept their own shortcomings. This greatly hampers a player's development as a person as well as a soccer player.

Think about it: if your team were so good, why would a single bad call by a referee cost you the game? If your team was so great, wouldn't they have won the match by three or four goals, making the poor call practically meaningless?

This can be a major issue too if a bad call is made early in the game. Suppose a poor call gave away a penalty and a resulting goal to the opposition in the tenth minute of a game. The whiner will remember that moment for the rest of the game, and when your team falls 1-0, will decry the injustice of the ref! But that's exactly the problem. That haunting thought forces desperation and a recipe for failure in

your team. Your players need to grow up and move on from the mistaken call. Put it in the past and continue to play your game. A mature and confident side will rarely fall victim to such a result because they'll fight back and win the game.

Therefore, when a referee blows a call, look at the body language of your team, and get them to suck it up and move on from it. If a player is hanging their head and clearly distraught by the call, substitute them out from the game for a moment and talk to them to get their head straight. Don't allow your team to feel victimized and lose the game because of a silly referee decision!