



Game Day Coaching Philosophy and Expectations

BEFORE THE GAME

- Make sure you have your medical kit and ice
- Welcome all your players individually as they arrive
- Organize the players into an appropriate warm-up (never start with stretching)
- the warm-up should not include lines or laps
- players should get a lot of touches on the ball
- players should have to move in multiple directions (just like in the game)
- players should develop a sweat before the game
- Make sure the players are properly hydrated
- Let the players know who is starting (and on what field if using the dual field set-up)
- Make a few coaching point reminders that pertain to the week's training
- Be enthusiastic and encouraging
- Relax and enjoy the game!

DURING THE GAME

- Sit in a chair and relax if you are not needed to referee the game
- Encourage the players, do not shout instructions (you are a model for the parents)
- If there is a referee, be supportive of the referee
- If you must give instructions, make them simple and to an absolute minimum. Treat your coaching points like tweets...SHORT & TO THE POINT!
- better to give individuals one-on-one advice personally than to yell
- Manage your substitutes fairly
- Relax and let the kids play!

HALFTIME CONSIDERATIONS

- Make sure there are no injuries
- Allow everyone to get some water
- Ask players if they are having fun, then ask what is going well and what to improve
- focus on two or three points to improve upon at most
- set performance goals (do better at a specific skill) not result-oriented goals (win)
- Make sure players know who is on the field to start the half
- Relax and enjoy the second half!

END OF GAME

- You and your players should shake hands with the other team and the referee
- Make sure no one is injured
- Ask the players if they had fun
- Point out a few positives from the game
- Give every player an individual complement after the game (not formally)

- Remind the players about the time, day and place of the next practice
- Makes sure all the players have a ride home
- Relax and enjoy the rest of your day!

Development v Winning

It's important to remember that the competition provided by games is simply another part of the overall soccer development of our players. While we as coaches should always encourage our players to compete and to strive towards winning, it's important that we don't allow the **RESULTS** alone to become the "be all and end all" of our efforts or the definition of our success. Instead when thinking about games, our primary focus should be on **PERFORMANCE**, taking into account the contributions of each player individually as well as the team as a whole. Some of the questions we can ask when looking at performances are as follows:

- Were we technically good?
- How well did we keep shape and stay organized?
- Did we attack well? Did we defend well?
- Did we have energy?
- How was our communication?
- Did we make good decisions on and off the ball?

By being able to answer these questions for individual players and the team, we will have a much better idea of what areas we need to work on during practices – we have a path towards improvement!

Playing Time on Game Days:

Coaches are expected to give all players a fair, balanced and (as best possible) equal amount of playing time during games. It's important that all players are given an equal opportunity to develop not just at team practices but also through gaining experience during competitive games.

While we don't expect coaches to monitor each single player's time on the field to precise minutes and seconds, we do ask that you make best efforts to ensure all players are given an equal opportunity to be involved and contribute to the team. A template of the "Subbing Grid" is provided on the NGS Coaches Section resource page and can be used to help coaches manage playing time if required.

Every age level (U9-U14):

1. Every healthy player plays at least 50% of each half of game period — no exceptions.
2. Over the course of the season, every player should have approximately equal playing time.
3. Every attempt should be made for players to start either the first or second half of each game.
4. Generally playing goalkeeper is not a substitute for field playing time, and additional field playing time should be given to non-dedicated players that play goalkeeper.
5. No player shall play more than one half at GK.

Specialization - Rotation of Players through Positions:

"If your child could only study one subject at school you'd worry about their development & the missed opportunities for them to learn new skills. So why for some sports/coaches is Early Specialization perceived as acceptable?"

It's VERY important that coaches give all players on their team exposure to different positions over the course of the season. A player that is constantly played in one position from at a young age will quickly become one-dimensional and predictable. They will lack the ability to adapt their game and compete as they get older. When players are rotated through different positions, they are forced to think more and they will develop a greater overall understanding of the game. They will be required to use different skill sets in real game situations and this will only help to make them more diverse and better rounded players. It is recommended that players play in 2 x different positions per game which is rotated over the course of the season so that play in each and every position on the field.

Please note that this includes Goal Keeper! Every player on your team should play AT LEAST one half of a game in goal each season.

Substitutions on Game Day:

Soccer can be a physically demanding sport and substituting is an important part of the youth game. Not only does it provide players with a recovery period off the field of play where they can take on fluids and replenish their energy levels - it also provides a window of very useful and important coaching time.

When a player has been subbed out, a coach has the opportunity to provide important and useful feedback on the "shift" that player has just put in. This feedback (if required) doesn't need to take any longer than a few moments but it can be incredibly useful to the player as the game is fresh in their mind.

When a player is put into the game, it is recommended and encouraged that the coach lets that player remain in the game at that position for an extended period before they are subbed out again. Leaving the player in the game for longer shifts will help them to better understand and get into the "rhythm" or "flow" of the game. It will also increase the likelihood and frequency of the player dealing with scenarios that are specific to the position in which they are playing – this is a key factor in development!

Age Group Minimum recommended shift duration:

U10 6-8 min

U11 8-10 min

U12 10-12 min

U13/14 12-15 min

IMPORTANT – Obviously injuries or fatigue can be a limiting factor and should be taken into consideration when deciding on how long a player stays on the field.