

# The Best Team to Coach is a Team of Orphans

By Kaci Mulberry -Girls Soccer Coach

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We appreciate their willingness to allow us to republish it on our website.

The best team to coach is a team full of orphans. Of course this is from the coaches' point of view. You may ask why this is so. I believe that I have the answer. A team of orphans has no parents to second-guess your decisions, or to tell you why their child should play more than everyone else, or to scream from the sidelines at officials and players. But most importantly, there would not be any parents around to criticize the children for losing.

At the developmental stage, many children do not care about winning or losing nor should they be pressured to. What is important is that they learn about their sport and how to play it properly. There will be plenty of time to generate the competitiveness that so many parents are frothing to find in their children. The biggest detriment to most children is not that they may lose a game but the pressure their parents put on them which tends to make them feel like failures. So, the moral of this article is to coach your parents as much as you coach your teams because your players spend far more time with them than you.

The easiest way to coach your parent is to educate them as well. By educating the parents we are seeking to raise their level of interests as well as their level of knowledge of the game. By being interested and knowledgeable, you provide parents the opportunity to have constructive conversations with players. Once more the easiest way to educate parents is to involve them in the sport. If parents participate in the sport, they are then able to understand the efforts and hardships of the players - not just the victories.

In my experience, I was coaching an under eleven developmental girls soccer team. I was having some problems with some parents applying too much pressure on their kids to win. That's when I realized that the kids were having fun on the field, but when they came off the field there was that overwhelming pressure that they played well, but they didn't win. This is when I decided that I needed to better the experience for everyone. I realized that we needed to change the atmosphere the team was competing in. I found that by encouraging the parents to play themselves, they gained a better understanding of the game.

The more the parents participated, the less pressure they applied to players. This led to the inception of a parents team where they practiced and played as hard as the girls did. The result of all of this was that the atmosphere changed to allow the girls to enjoy the sport and the parents to understand it. This improved our whole team experience and led to a great season. The most important thing that coaches need to do is not fall victim to the pressure from parents and outside sources. The player's experience is what truly matters.

Now there are many options available for coaches to get their parents involved by Positive Coaching, local clubs, recreation centers, and other outside sources. From the coaches perspective, the point of this article is to help encourage team parents to physically participate in the sport and create a better experience for the players, parents, and coaches.

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## *Positive Coaching Vision Statement:*

*Positive Coaching, Inc. believes that the foundation of our future is in its youth, and that sports are an essential part of a young person's physical emotional, and spiritual development in the U.S. culture today.*

*Participation in sports helps the young person build positive self esteem a strong work ethic, morals, and cooperation through team building.*

*Positive Coaching believes that positive influences modeled by coaches, parents, teachers, peers media, professional athletes and others contribute to the well being and the healthy development of youth.*

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