

10 COMMANDMENTS FOR PARENTS

From *Soccer Jr. Magazine*

A soccer parent's role – whether a coach, referee or fan – is to make the game rewarding and enjoyable for the players. We already know that coaches should be good role models who keep the game fun for their players. A coach needs to teach the players to give maximum effort and win or lose with grace. The referees keep the game safe and fair, thus fun for the players. They know that the results of the game are not as important as maintaining a fun atmosphere for the kids.

But what can parents do to help? Well, they can simply be parents. They should “be there” for the kids - help them celebrate when things go well, support them when they don't and interpret the game's lessons for them. It helps to remember the “Soccer Parents' 10 Commandments” from *Soccer Jr. magazine*.

1. Learn the rules or be quiet.
2. Be quiet anyway, except to cheer.
3. Never scorn playing for fun as its own end.
4. Don't think of team spirit and fair play as the opposites of excellence.
5. Know what the coach is doing and support him or her.
6. Never let a coach abuse your child or anyone else's, verbally or otherwise.
7. Show respect for the referee.
8. If you like the soccer program's emphasis, get involved.
9. If you don't, say so, get involved and try to make it better.
10. Listen to your child.

These commandments say it all. Don't yell, except to cheer – that is, be positive. Remember that fun and fair play are important on their own. Let the coach do the coaching and the referee do the refereeing. You do the parenting. If you like the program, work for it. If you don't like it, then try to make it better.

And perhaps most importantly, listen to your child. If he or she is enjoying soccer, that's great. If not, then try to find out why not and fix it by working to change what's going on at the field or else find an alternate activity that your child enjoys. Don't make your child play soccer – or any other sport – just because you want him or her to do it. Youth sports exist to benefit the children, not to build up adults' egos.

It's supposed to be *fun*, win or lose.