

YELLING FROM THE SIDELINES

By Lawrence Fine

How often have you seen young players get real confused on the field because they have different people yelling different things to them at the same time? The coach is yelling one thing to the player, a teammate is yelling something else and a parent is yelling something completely different from the stands. Who should the player listen to when this is happening?

While things vary depending upon the age group and level of play, an accurate way to describe much of the responsibilities of a coach during games is to say that practices are for the coaches to teach and games are for the players to demonstrate what they have learned. While it's normal to have occasional minor corrections made during a game the decision making for the most part has to be made on the field by the players. The sidelines and the stands are not good places to see what is happening. The people with the best view are usually the players who are on the field participating in the action. To think that a person on the sideline can see the same thing as the player who is right there is absurd. It's true that the person on the sideline might see things very differently, but the only way for the player to learn to make the correct decision is to allow them to make a decision whether it's right or wrong (it could be argued that there aren't wrong decisions but rather some just work out better than others) and then they can learn from their decision in order to make even better decisions in the future.

Would students learn if, while taking their tests during school, the teacher was telling them exactly how to do things? Maybe they would get a good grade short term but would this really be learning? Would this prepare the student for the future or simply be addressing the short term?

Does it make things more or less difficult for players if, not only are their coaches telling them what to do during games, but also the parents and spectators are trying to tell them what to do? Not only does this remove some of the decision making for the player but also if nothing else, it confuses the players even more. Should the player listen to the coach, the parents, the spectators or themselves?

As a player, learn as much as possible during your training sessions and whenever possible so that the game can be when you demonstrate what you have learned, and have fun.

As a coach, understand there is a time and place for coaching but during a game frequently the yelling from the sidelines telling players what to do and when is NOT that time.

As a parent or spectator, understand that and directions you are yelling to the players is usually not being heard or understood but those that are heard frequently result in

confusion as what they see and what you see is much different and even if it is the same, the players have to have the freedom to make the decision on their own.

About the author: *Lawrence Fine has been coaching for over 20 years from youth to college. He also works as a consultant for Kwik Goal and NSCAA. You can read more from Lawrence on the web at www.finesoccer.com*

From PA West Touchline newsletter, August 2004