



Team Conflict

The SVU Academy

Together players, coaches, managers, and parents all make up a youth soccer team. These are all important people. Unfortunately, when people come together small issues and problems can arise which, if not addressed, can become big issues and problems and can eventually interfere with the functioning of a good team.

Each person associated with your team has roles and responsibilities. The role of the player is well understood. He or she must arrive promptly with the appropriate equipment, well fed and hydrated, and be ready to play and learn soccer. The player must accept feedback from the coach and must constantly strive to understand and improve. The player must accept and respond to the authority of the coach. Simple!

The role of the coach is as the trainer and decision maker for the team. The team is not a democracy. All decisions regarding strategy, positions, playing time, practice field location and times, tournaments, rosters -- everything related to soccer - are made by the coach. The coach understands that the happiness, skill, and development of each player on the team is directly related to the success of the entire team.

What about parents? The main role of the parent has already been completed - they have selected an excellent team with an excellent coach for their child. Now they pay the fees, get their player to trainings and games on time, and stand on the sidelines cheering and supporting their kids. They love their kids and want them to succeed. So sometimes they can't help but wonder - is my kid getting enough playing time? Is she developing quickly enough and reaching her full potential? Why did the coach put that kid in instead of mine? Let's face it - sometimes the parenting instincts and emotions can get a little carried away.

At times like these parents begin to chat amongst the other parents. Cliques may form. Private conversations ensue. A plan is hatched, seemingly with universal support among the parents. Something must be done! And you, as team manager, are just the one to do it. Encourage positive talk on the sidelines, be an example of a good fan and supporter of the coach. Parents may need to be reminded that the coach is expected to know more than they do about how to coach soccer and so may not always agree with their suggestions on how the team should be run.

The main role of the team manager in a conflict is to direct the parent to the coach. Any parent who has questions or concerns about any aspect of their child's or the team's soccer experience should speak with the only person with responsibility for that experience - the coach. The coach can listen, and he can explain the principles he is using in running the team in practices and games. A good coach will always be interested in talking to the most important people in his players' lives. Ideally, if parents have concerns they should first go directly to their coach. If parents prefer, they may go directly to the Director of Coaching to resolve problems.

But honestly, when all is said and done, the parents have the ultimate responsibility... they can exercise that responsibility by finding another team, or another sport, or another activity altogether.