

TO THE SOCCER COACHES AND PARENTS

America, where we expect to be the best in everything and winning first place is glory, we forget the development of the players. We forget the process of improving the children. If we evaluate the coaches, you'll see the screaming and running up and down on the sidelines and turning all red, because of the call the twelve year old referee just made who's just learning the game himself. See the parents follow his(her) lead, yelling pass, pass the ball and shoot the ball.

Let the kids play. Let them use their own mind. If you stop and think, soccer is the most creative game you'll find. Let the children be creative. Anyway, they came to play not to work. Coaches, make your practices fun. Don't be the coach they avoid when they see you at the market.

If you know Pele and Maradona they have the moves that are beyond everything you see. No coach taught those moves. They learned from friends trying to copy others when they were playing games at the back yard or kicking the ball against the garage door. Remember, just give the kids the ball.

They will learn things on their own, but they still must learn skills for soccer. If they can't dribble or shoot, who should be blamed? Coaches need to help develop those skills. You see, players are not judged by their wins and losses, they're judged by shots, headers , crosses and fine passes.

Scholarships are given to a player who works hard to make a name, not because her or his youth team never lost a game. A pro player gets paid for her/his excellent skills, not because his/her little team never lost a game when he/she was only learning the beautiful game.

Parents, admit we're obsessed with the glory of winning. When our kids come back home after a game the first thing we ask: Did you win? Did you score a goal? Instead why we don't start with: How was the game? Did you have fun? Did your team play well? How did you play? Did you try any new move? Or perhaps we should just ask: what was the snack today?

I want you to remember, when they're only nine, there are many games ahead and the next one will always be the best. Coaches and parents, before you go to bed at the end of the day, think how you handled yourself on the sidelines during the game, practice or on the way home. Do you feel proud of how you have acted?

This is a summary of my beliefs, of what I have heard, read, seen and thought all these years of coaching.

Javier Chavez