



7 Steps to Get Parents to Stop Talking on the Sidelines

We can
change culture
if we
change behavior



Why Do Parents Talk on the Sidelines?

- They think they are helping
- They are feeling stress:
 - Child seems confused or lost
 - Child isn't focused enough
 - Child is underperforming
 - Referee made a poor call
 - They are upset with something that happened on the field
- It's a generally accepted thing to do

What is: “Talking on the Sidelines”

- U-10 and under
 - Telling child what to do, how to play, where to go
 - Getting upset with referees
 - Encouragement to child
- U-11-U-13
 - All of the above
 - Getting Frustrated with their child
- U-14 and older
 - All of the above
 - Getting upset with other players

3 Types of Sideline Communication

- Supportive
- Disruptive
- Hostile

Your Role As A Youth Soccer Coach:

- Be a resource/guide for parents – educate them
- Help parents have perspective – building TRUST
- Build your social awareness skills – EQ
- Address sideline talking before it happens
- Make reducing sideline talking a team goal that parents can take part in

7 Steps to Get Parents to Stop Talking from the Sidelines

Step 1 - Team Meeting

- Before season – address it before team habits are formed
- Set clear expectations
- Make it a priority – Ask for their buy in – Ask for suggestions
- Be a resource/guide for parents – educate them
- Help parents understand what the kids are feeling
- Build your social awareness skills – building trust

Check out the Meeting Outline at SoccerParenting.com/NSCAA



Pre-Season Team Meeting Outline re: Talking from Sidelines

1. We all want your children to thrive on the soccer fields. One of the ways we can ensure this happens is by making sure the sidelines are as quiet as possible during the games. There are three primary categories of talking that happens from the sidelines:

Supportive, Distracted and Hostile

SUPPORTIVE	DISTRACTED	HOSTILE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good try• Nice pass• Good work!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shoot• Pass to "name"• Go to the ball!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can do better• Come on Ref!• Get in the game!

2. My hope and goal for this year when it comes to sideline behavior has four parts to it.

1. Eliminate the Hostile communication from the sidelines – all of it.
2. Identify the differences between supportive and distracted communication
3. Then, eliminate the distracted communication.
4. Finally – to make sure the supportive communication is serving the needs of the kids instead of merely an attempt to relieve the stress you are feeling on the sidelines.

3. Any questions about this? As a parent, how do you feel about this?

4. I will be sending you a couple of emails in the next week to delve more about this team goal. I appreciate your support of the team, as your support is essential to our success.

5. Here are some challenges we will face:

1. Our referees are not going to be perfect
2. Your children will not be perfect (it can be stressful!)
3. We will lose games
4. Other parents from other teams will be poorly behaved
5. Some of you don't realize how much you talk or how distracting it can be

6. Thank you for your support – Again – I believe this will help the kids thrive.

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Step 2 - Email 1

- Follow up email sent just after the meeting
 - Text of email
 - Thank you for your support
 - Describe 3 types of communication
 - Highlight team goals
 - Video from SoccerParenting.com & Sam Snow included

Text of Email One:

NOTE THIS IS A DRAFT – A BASIC OUTLINE FOR YOU TO FOLLOW. THIS IS NOT INTENDED FOR YOU TO CUT AND PASTE INTO AN EMAIL

Dear Parents:

I am very excited at the soccer season ahead. Each of your children will grow and develop as soccer players and people, and I am grateful to be a part of this growth.

Thank you for trusting me.

I wanted to follow up to the parent meeting and send an email about one of our team goals for the year:

Sideline Communication from Parents

As we discussed, there are three types of sideline communication:

SUPPORTIVE	DISRUPTIVE	HOSTILE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good try• Nice pass• Good work!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shoot• Pass to "name"• Go to the ball!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can do better• Come on Ref!• Get in the game!

Our sideline communication team goal has four components:

1. Eliminate the Hostile communication from the sidelines – all of it.
2. Identify the differences between supportive and disruptive communication
3. Then, eliminate the disruptive communication.
4. Finally – to make sure the supportive communication is serving the needs of the kids instead of merely an attempt to relieve the stress you are feeling on the sidelines.

Here is a link to a short video from The Institute for Soccer Parenting regarding sideline communication:

As always, thanks for your support and commitment to the team!

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Step 3 – Email 2

- Sent a few days after first email – highlights importance
- Recap communication goals for the year
- Maintain focus on the PROCESS
- Shift conversation to ideal learning environments (this will start addressing the distracting and positive communication)
- Send them information about other resources

Text of Email Two:

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Dear Parents:

Thank you so much for your positive response to one of our team goals – Sideline Communication. I am really excited about your response and support – because I know that the result of us meeting this goal will be the children having a better experience.

While I am certainly not asking for you to be completely silent during games, as I understand that is not necessarily realistic for parents and that your children want to know you are engaged, I am hoping that you will be more mindful of how and when you do communicate this season.

I wanted to share another short video with you from SoccerParenting.com about what can start to happen with our children when they have limited distractions on the field.

VIDEO LINK

Thanks for your support and commitment to the team!

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Step 4 – Engage During Pre-Game

- Organize your warm up such that there can be a no more than 3 minute parent huddle prior to the game – same place, same time (sideline at corner of 18, 30 minutes prior to game, for instance)
- Discuss:
 - Objectives for the game
 - Depending on age and level – system of play to start with
 - Reminder for parent behavior – duct tape and lollipops
 - No questions – just in and out (imagine a sideline reporter interview)

Pre-Game Reminders

- Hostile communication to referees, your children, other players, parents - is not tolerated.
- After you say something – ask yourself if it was supportive or distracting.
- Remember – when you talk – your kids hear you...and when they hear you, they are not hearing their teammates or me.
- You will most likely feel some stress during the game...about a call, your child's performance, someone else's performance - please don't deal with your stress by saying anything out loud.
- Enjoy watching your child thrive!

The culture of any team is shaped by the worst behavior the coach is willing to tolerate.



Step 5 – Reinforce Positive Behavior

- Increases the likelihood the behavior will occur again in the future
- Have the kids go thank their parents immediately after the game before they gather their bags
- Thank the parents for their behavior via a quick email after a game
- Send articles and videos (SoccerParenting.com/NSCAA)
- Be genuine and sincere – REMIND THEM THE WHY

“I felt like the players did a fantastic job communicating amongst themselves during the game today – and part of that credit goes to each of you. When you don’t talk on the sidelines, the players can talk amongst themselves. Thank you!”

Step 6 – Thank Them Individually

- Try to do this 4 times for each parent in the year
- If you want to change culture, you need to continually focus on the behavior objectives for the entire season
 - Individual meetings with players/parents
 - After a game
 - During those awkward conversations
- Essential for the parent who was previously hostile and distracting

Step 7 – Ask for Feedback

- 6 Weeks
 - How is is going?
 - Need any help?
- 6 Months
 - How is is going?
 - Noticing any changes/differences for you and your child?
 - Send re-cap feedback received email
- End of season
 - How did we do on our goal?
 - Anything different to do next season?

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Slides and Downloads available at:

www.SoccerParenting.com/NSCAA

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