

## Putting It All Together

Athletes learn the game of soccer not only through the directed learning experiences that coaches provide in practice and game play but also through indirect means by observation and imitation. As a sport leader, you are a powerful and lasting role model for athletes by your thought, word and deed. Parents and coaches can serve as a player's greatest ally or worst nightmare depending on the attitude, behavior and motivation adopted for sport involvement. Remember, **the game is for the kids. It is not for the ego or bragging rights of adults.** Our role, as coaches, is to provide an opportunity for participation for all interested youngsters, access to appropriate and safe environments for instruction and competition, exposure to caring and competent leaders, holistic consideration of the child's entire development (physical, cognitive, social and psychological) and an unwavering belief in the worth and ability of children to succeed at their own unique level of accomplishment. When coaches expect every athlete to succeed, it's amazing how many of them really do.

Rather than measuring success in terms of numbers in the win/loss columns, perhaps the **ultimate standard of our success as coaches should be judged by our ability to teach children to love and enjoy the game of soccer, to feel more confident and self-assured in their abilities and knowledge of the game, to experience mutual respect from both teammates and coaches, and most importantly, to feel appreciation and pride in the opportunity they had to play a sport they love under your direction as their coach.**

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