

THE COST OF WINNING

Can We Help Children Dealing with Losing?

Children enjoy competition but don't need to be pushed to 'win'. However, being so young they're not sure how to handle the ups and down that come with competition, leagues and don't necessarily know how to deal with losing.

Coaches must be consistent in the way they help children with competition and the approach to Talent ID and 'best with the best.' Coaching in grassroots soccer is about providing opportunity, developing skillful players, and enhancing enjoyment, so we should provide environments to develop people through the game of soccer which can be competitive, and where everyone gains success.

The Result Does Matter but At What Cost?

We can sometimes hear "the result is not important". But does that send out the wrong message? The result is important and the byproduct from coaching, programming, and development long term – but the way the team and individuals behave during the game is the most important thing. The score is not always a reflection of the game and cannot be used as the only measurable of development and fun. Playing various small, sided games with various groupings of players will ensure everyone is challenged and made to feel part of the game.

Results Aren't Always a True Reflection.

The worst examples of coach behaviour come when a coach feels that the result is a reflection of them. You are not the best coach if your team wins, and you are not the worst coach if your team loses. Within grassroots game competition model, coaches are encouraged to look at the 'small victories' children may display. These may include observation of 1v1 skill, creative play, combinations with teammates, defending bravely etc.

The Children are Watching You.

During competition and games, a coach's role is to be the filter for the children to help them deal with their emotions. The children can simply copy what the adults do when they lose a game. Remember they are watching your actions and behaviours before, during and after the game.