

A MESSAGE TO BEGINNING YOUTH COACHES

by Gary Williamson, NTSSA State Coach

Dear Coach,

Here at North Texas State Soccer Association we are pleased you have volunteered and agreed to coach a youth team. Some of you, we are sure, just can't wait to start. However, for most of you this is probably your first encounter with soccer coaching and you are understandably very apprehensive about the season ahead.

Coaching young children is a challenge in patience and understanding and in creating an atmosphere on the practice field, which is conducive to learning. As a youth coach there is a danger that you may be more interested in teaching what you know than the children are in learning what you have to offer. Young children (U6-U8) are really more concerned about having fun and being in a happy environment than they are in learning how to become good soccer players.

If you have ever watched a good elementary school teacher, especially a good gym teacher, you will notice that his or her success in teaching depends a great deal upon their ability to create the proper learning environment. The children are comfortable, having fun and not feeling threatened. The children are under control and interested in what they are being taught. The fact that the teacher is well prepared, organized, knows the subject matter and communicates effectively is important. These are the factors that go to make a proper learning environment.

After completing a 'G' introductory course and coaching for a season or more, you may discover the joy of helping young children and decide to continue in this role. If this is the case, give a thought to your own growth and development as a coach. Since you obviously care about your players and want a good experience for them, you need to allocate time and effort towards your own development as a coach. Enroll in coaching courses and attend as many clinics as possible. Watch the highest level of soccer available in your area and on TV. Read coaching books, study videos. All these activities will help add to your soccer knowledge and effectiveness as a coach.

Please do not hesitate to contact North Texas State Soccer Association any time you need advice or help. Enjoy the season and good luck in your coaching endeavors!