



October 21, 2006 Corner Kicks

I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Ruben for coming up with the idea of having a weekly chat room dialogue for coaches, referees and parents. We believe this will be a great way to timely discuss issues that affect all of us during the course of the season. This will also allow us to obtain great ideas that we can implement to enhance everyone's AYSO experience. We will most likely limit participation to ten people per chat and each chat room will be moderated by one of the AYSO board of directors. We will try to begin this program in the next few weeks. Further information will be forthcoming in future Dribbles and Kicks as well as on our website at www.ayso644.org.

We are currently in the midst of our first ESPN Coaches Fundraising Program. As you are aware of, AYSO Region 644 has not increased player registration fees for over three years despite the increase in fees incurred with the City of Weston, AYSO National and across the board increases by our vendors. In addition, within the last two seasons, we have added training from Cor4 Soccer without having to pass these costs on to the participants. And finally, we are proud to provide a quality fun-filled value added program at the lowest youth registration cost in Weston. We would like to continue this trend and therefore we have partnered with ESPN in this fundraising program. We are requesting that each participant sell two magazine subscriptions over the next month. Each subscription costs \$20 of which \$12 of each subscription comes back to AYSO Region 644!!! ESPN also provides prizes for the children who sell these subscriptions, ranging from 35mm cameras, to ESPN T-Shirts, sports watches, portable cd players and portable black and white televisions. Each team should have received the ESPN packets. If you have not or if your team needs more of these packets, please contact Joni Precht at Lprecht@bellsouth.net. We will be having additional information on our website beginning next week.

Make up times for picture day is tomorrow Sunday October 22, 2006. Teams that did not attend the original picture day on Sunday October 15, 2006 should have contacted Claire Hager at LFH4@MSN.COM to schedule a make up time. Individuals who missed their team pictures last Sunday should arrive at the soccer fields at noon tomorrow in order to get their pictures taken. Referees will have a group picture taken tomorrow and they should contact Pat Henderstein at the pavilion for the proper time to arrive.

Registration for our spring 2007 season will begin November 1, 2006 online on our website at www.ayso644.org. The cost once again will be \$110 with the season running from late February through May. Please register early as spots will fill up quickly and we may be in a waitlist situation early. Please note that for the U5 division the player must be 4 years of age by September 15, 2006.

This season we once again have soccer training for divisions U7-U19 provided by Cor4Soccer. These training sessions are held Tuesdays through Thursdays on soccer field 8. You can access the training schedules in the parent-player handbook that you have received as well as online at www.ayso644.org under the link "schedules" and then the sublink "training schedules"

Cor 4 Soccer is announcing Goalkeeper Training on Thursday evenings on soccer field 8. Every Thursday evening during our season, all AYSO participants are welcome to participate in goalkeeper training. Goalkeepers in the U7, U8 and U10 divisions will train from 6:30pm-7:30pm and those in the U12, U14 and U19 divisions will train from 7:45pm-8:45pm. This goalkeeper training is free of charge for all of our AYSO registered participants.

Do you know about our VIP Program? The VIP program is a recreational soccer program for emotionally and physically challenged individuals ages 4 and up. AYSO Region 644 offers the program free of charge to the participants with two ten week seasons played on Sundays from 11:00am-12:30 pm beginning in early September. Service hours are offered for high school students. We have 73 participants signed up for the VIP program and we are in need of volunteers to help. Valeska McDonald-Munoz at 954-812-1922.

Let's have a great week out there with lots of laughter and smiles.

See You On The Fields
Richard Schwartz
Regional Commissioner

Hometown Concessions

Are you hungry for a hotdog, hamburger, pizza or just need a nice cold refreshment? How about candy or popcorn? If so, there are two concession stands that are open each practice and game days near field 3 and 7. Hometown Concessions has been a wonderful partner to the Weston Sports Alliance for the past 5 seasons. They contribute 12% of the proceeds that we all spend at the soccer fields back to the soccer program, and a full supporter of our VIP program, allowing us to defray the program cost to you and making our program the least expensive of all youth athletic programs in Weston.

Lost and Found

Have you lost anything at our fields? Or have you found any items? If so, please come to the pavilion between fields 4 and 5 to claim or submit lost items.

A Word From Our Sponsors

“Let the Games Begin !”

The 2006 AYSO 644 Season Sponsors wish each of you a great upcoming season full of fond soccer memories. Likewise, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors for their generous support for which our program is dependent upon to be successful. AYSO has established a tradition of patronizing its sponsors, and we would encourage each of you to personally thank those that you may already do business with, or consider them if you find the need for their services. AYSO is exceptionally grateful for their year-over-year support through both their financial contributions, as well as the time spent by the majority of them volunteering as coaches, referees, and team parents within our program.

Please read the listing of our sponsors to the right, or look them up on our web site: www.ayso644.org. Take the opportunity to thank them and call on them for assistance if you have the need or are indifferent about your current provider.

It's Never to Late to Sponsor a Team or a Field.

AYSO 644 2006 Season Sponsors Thank you !

1-800-Got Junk	305-632-2036
Century 21 AAA Realty Inc.	
Erwin van der Bunt	476-6200
Advanced Technology Metals	935-5565
Alquimia	499-4515
Associated Paint	305-885-1964
Awards Excellence Marketing	929-4949
Baers Furniture	389-0121
Broward Hand Center Inc	575-8056
Café Ala Carte	349-1030
Carnival Cruise Lines	305-406-5777
Cohen & Greenburg LLC	659-8300
Dr. John J. Marchetto, Orthodontist	389-1002
Drs. Friedel & Bolski Family Dentistry	389-0511
Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Kosar	
Laser Metals, Inc.	935-5565
Law Offices of Joseph Lipsky	693-0073
The Glassman Law Firm	915-8800
McHugh Construction	315-3682
Millennium Laser Eye Center	835-0800
PFS Realty	394-2480
Platinum Mosquito Protection Inc	888-9311
Publix Supermarkets	305-652-2411
Realty World South Florida	217-9895
Mr. Quick Print	566-8888
Soccer Max	382-0040
Sun Sentinel	385-7981
Ultimate Software Group	331-7485
Weston Area Chamber of Commerce	389-0600
Wings Plus	389-1933

We would like to also thank the following individuals who have contributed as booster sponsors to our program for the 2006-2007 season.

Alfredo Rivas, Andre Saade, Beatriz Saez, Bernie Kosar, Carey Laufer, Eileen Danoff, Evelyn Lau, Horacio Mingo, Jacqueline Gillman, Janice Davis, Karen Arkin, Maria Beatriz Bonaduce, Marie-Christine Theodore, Oscar Molina, Patricia Rengifo, Ramon Maldonado, Shannon Tuaty, Vanita Sharma

My View: By Mike Voitalla

Do we want Robinhos or Robots?

How over-coaching and the emphasis on winning stifle young American talent.

The little boy dribbled and kept dribbling. He had taken the ball away from the midfield pack and zoomed toward his own goal. This surprised the other children and allowed him to keep the ball to himself for much longer than any player had managed during this U-8 game.

Having put some 15 yards between himself and the other players, he slowed down and seemed to marvel at all the territory he now had to himself. He started making a wide U-turn and flashed a big smile.

He moved down the sideline and back into the other team's half, then put his foot on the ball and stopped. When a couple of his little opponents approached, he accelerated toward their goal and took a shot that nearly scored.

What creativity, improvisation and savvy! And in his smile was the joy of soccer.

So how did his coach react?

First with red-faced screams of "You're going the wrong way! You're going the wrong way!" Then furious shouts of "Pass it! Pass it!" -- a chant that several parents took up -- followed by head-shaking in frustration.

Of course, the coach was shouting instructions to all his players throughout the game. That's the norm in youth soccer, in which misguided coaches -- and the other adults on the sideline -- believe they're helping children become better soccer players by telling them where to run and when to pass.

But what really irked the coach about the clever boy's maneuver was it was risky. A misstep and he could have provided a scoring chance for the other team.

And, absurd as it is, there are adults -- lots and lots of them -- who place great importance on whether their 7-year-olds beat another team of youngsters.

Youth coaches who want to rack up wins discourage their players from taking risks, such as dribbling the ball out of the back, by ordering them to boot it up-field or out of bounds. "Clear it!" they shout.

"The emphasis on winning is a detriment to young players because it prevents us from developing technically proficient players," says U.S. U-17 national team coach John Hackworth. "And we're not giving them the ability to make decisions. You can't find a youth soccer game where the coaches aren't screaming the whole time, telling kids what they should do and how they should do it."

If players aren't allowed to make mistakes and take chances when they're exploring the sport -- if they're constantly being told what to do -- how can we expect them to develop the soccer instincts they'll need to make the split-second decisions that are so much a part of the game?

"They hear 'Clear it ... Get rid of it ... Pass it ... Kick it up line' so often that by the time they're 13 or 14, when they get the ball and they don't hear the instructions, they don't know what to do," says Tab Ramos, the great U.S. midfielder who is now a New Jersey youth coach.

Telling young players what to do with the ball, bossing them around to stay in certain positions on the field and taking strategic advantage of the bigger, stronger kids are ways of increasing a team's chances of winning. But at what cost?

"If you want your 8-year-olds to win tomorrow, you're going to address that group differently than if you say, 'I want my 8-year-old to win when he's 18 years old,'" says Bob Jenkins, U.S. Soccer's Director of Coaching Education.

It's not just that the coaches are obsessed with winning -- there are the parents. A coach of a U-9 team told me that if his team compiled a 12-1 win-loss record, his parents would want to move their children to the team that went 13-0.

Ramos encourages his younger players, the 9- and 10-year-olds, not to kick the ball out of bounds when they're under pressure in their own half.

"We want him to find a way out of it," Ramos says. "Half the time, he's not going to come out of it and very often he's going to make a mistake that's going to cost a goal. But this is when players should be allowed to take the risk so they develop their skills."

Too few coaches are willing to provide such learning experiences because they can lead to losses.

"A lot of parents are living through their children," Ramos says, "and for them it becomes a matter of them beating the other coach because that's the guy who beat them three years ago when their older child played."

Hackworth, who doesn't believe in assigning positions to players under age 10, proposes eliminating the "ultra-competitive premier flight" until at least U-12. And even then coaches should still resist becoming results oriented.

"We want competition," he says. "They'll always be competition and it's not bad. The bad part is the emphasis on winning."

That emphasis often results in coaches putting the physically advanced kids in particular spots. For example, a big guy in back who's instructed to boot the ball to the speedy guy up front. This denies smaller players opportunities to play significant roles while bigger players can rely on their athleticism instead of developing their skills.

Aime Jacquet, who coached France to the 1998 World Cup title and has also been in charge of France's renowned youth development program, said he investigates youth teams with winning records and if he discovers they won by relying on big players, he fires them.

If a coach isn't obsessed with results, he's more likely, when they're at the age level in which assigning positions is appropriate, to expose players to different roles. Keeping a player in the same position all the time won't help him adjust to new challenges when he moves to higher levels.

"Worrying too much about winning and losing gets in the way of development," says Manfred Schellscheidt, head of U.S. Soccer's U-14 program. "There are always shortcuts that you can find to win the next game. That doesn't necessarily mean you'll be winning five, six years from now."

"The kids all try to win anyhow, so I don't think we need to add to this. No kid ever steps on the field and says, 'Today I'm going to lose.' They're naturally competitive. We should be concerned about the players' performance, not the final score."

Coaching soccer really isn't that complicated. When children first become involved in organized soccer, the coach's job is simply to create an environment that gives the children a chance to enjoy the sport. It's such a wonderful sport that setting up goals and letting them play usually does the trick.

It should also be an environment that allows them to be creative, to express themselves and to bring their own personalities to the sport.

No doubt, the USA has produced legions of good players. But how many great players have come out of our youth ranks?

How many excellent American dribblers are there? How many American players can dazzle fans? How many defenders do we have who can play their way out of trouble, who can consistently contribute to the attack? How many American players can dictate the rhythm of a game?

Far, far too few.

And one wonders how many players with the capacity to bring individual brilliance to the field have had that hammered out of them by their screaming coaches.

(Mike Woitalla is the executive editor of Soccer America Magazine and the co-author with Claudio Reyna of "More Than Goals: The journey from backyard games to World Cup competition." This article originally appeared in the October 2006 issue of Soccer America Magazine. Send comments to mike@socceramerica.com)