



Balls, cones and kids

the footy4kids soccer coaching newsletter

Issue 11 - November 2005

**restore team discipline
and inject new life and
purpose into your
coaching sessions**

Introduction

I was alerted to the following two articles by a post in the footy4kids [soccer coaches forum](#).

The articles below are designed to help coaches who have been with the same team for a number of years and have, perhaps, allowed discipline to slacken off to the detriment of team morale and performance.

However, I think any coach would be well advised to build the principles described below into their coaching philosophy to maintain and proactively improve three essential attributes of their teams - their attitude, morale and discipline.

1. how to restore discipline to an undisciplined soccer team

[soccer coaching
basics](#)

[how to teach
soccer skills](#)

[soccer drills and
games](#)

[soccer coaches
forum](#)

[soccer coaching
practice plans](#)

[coaching pre-
school children](#)

[get soccer
coaching advice](#)

[articles](#)

[management &
discipline](#)

[the newsletter](#)

[join the footy4kids supporters club!](#)

[soccer safety](#)

[refereeing youth soccer](#)

[useful downloads](#)

[indoor soccer](#)

[soccer history](#)

[books and manuals](#)

[coaching software](#)

[sign the guestbook!](#)

[links](#)

[even more links](#)

[site map](#)

[HOME](#)



 [Tell a friend about footy4kids](#)

[contact footy4kids](#)

from BruceBownlee.com

A soccer coach writes that the team he's had for several years isn't showing up for training but players come to matches. Here's the brief e-mail...

Question

Question for you about my U-15 girls soccer team. Our team is anything but disciplined. For 3 yrs we have moved up with very little discipline. Is it too late, do we need discipline, or should we just try to get a happy medium? I feel our team could be so much better if the players would have discipline. The players rarely try in practice but show up for games. What do you think?

Some Ideas

In practice, the problem you are observing is the area that is most troublesome for both of us and for most other coaches of players in the transitional years, leaving U14 and heading into U15 and U16. There's a big

difference between how kids feel about soccer in elementary school and middle school, and how they feel about it during the early high school years.

Here are a few ideas about the situation and some options you could consider to try to make improvements. There's no way to know which of these apply to your situation, so maybe you can just pick the ideas that you find relevant.

Why Discipline and Participation Problems Happen

1. Coach's uncritical and unrealistic vision of who the players are, who owns the team, and the nature of players' motivation.

It is easy to be overly sentimental and uncritical of a younger team of kids that you have worked with for several years. The coach may come to look on the team as his or her own team. This may seem only natural and reflect the coach's care for each of the players and dedication to the coach's vision of the team's future. Unfortunately, this isn't what the soccer team or players need to be most successful, and sets the stage for decay. First, the soccer team doesn't belong to the coach. Instead, the players and parents have their own agendas and have different expectations about the team.

In many cases, it is likely that the players and parents have less confidence in the coach or team than does the coach, and the team may not be very important to some. In any case, having a sentimental or overly optimistic view of the players and team prospects is the root cause of most of the rest of the problems listed below.

Sentimentality or a misplaced sense of ownership can lead the coach to excuse, rather than fix, poor skills and game habits, or to settle for less than the best each player can give. Lack of critical vision leads to inconsistent expectations, slack practices, low intensity, lazy practice participation, lowered morale, less effective player development, and frustratingly inconsistent match results.

The hardest thing for any coach is to realize that player's and parents aren't the coach's "friends", that the coach does not own the team, and that the coach is responsible for the technical, tactical, physical, and mental development of the team. This has to include not only setting demanding goals and creating challenging training, but also doing critical assessment of players abilities and potentials, and planning to replace players who are not committed and making good progress in

developing their abilities.

Lack of critical vision and sentimentality is the most common problem for parent coaches, and the biggest differentiate between the results obtained by parent coaches and those obtained by hired trainers who have no kids on the team. This difference also gives rise to the feeling among parents that hired trainers are too cutthroat in recruiting and replacing players. Sometimes true, sometimes sour grapes, but either way, this is the greatest differentiation, much more of a factor than coaching ability and experience in many cases.

[read the complete article](#)

2. energising a lazy team

or how to invigorate and restore discipline to youth coaching sessions

from BruceBownlee.com

1. Increasing the pace of your practice
2. Increasing the work rate in your training
3. Making everything competitive and publishing results regularly
4. Teach through games

- instead of line drills
wherever possible
5. Tailoring the psychological profile of your training sessions
 6. Identifying and encouraging your true believers
 7. Reward good practice effort with more starts and more playing time
 8. Replace non-believers with harder working players at the next tryout

Details:

1) Get them moving immediately on arrival, each player with a football, give them a series of 60 second technical exercises. Keep them moving the whole time except for short breaks. Award push-ups and sit-ups for foot draggers who deliberately delay getting on to the next exercise. Do not allow this and clearly state that you will not accept this. Since you have realized that they are not your friends, send lectures home on paper to read later, and don't let them waste time socializing once they step on the field on your time.

2) Break down exercises into greater numbers of groups with fewer players so that the action / rest ratio is increased. For each individual exercise, add extra physical

work or skill work to add to the effort. For example, instead of having two players one touch passing at 5 yards, have each player check away 3 steps after each pass and come back hard to one touch the next pass. Instead of 6 v 6, play two 3v3's if appropriate. While group one plays group two, group three can orbit the playing area completing plyometrics, stretching, jumping, skipping, backwards and side to side running, and other specialized physical work.

3) Juggling, relays with ball control and speed required, 1v1 to cones, penalty kicks, and all kinds of other competitions can be done on a regular basis as a productive part of practice, and you can easily keep records, publish them by keeping standings and sending these home on a regular basis. Sprints of various distances, and other measures of aerobic fitness are also appropriate. If you are alone and don't have a helper to write down results, buy a hand held tape record at Office Depot and you can record your results without even losing sight of your training session. (Side note: hand held tape recording onto micro cassette is an excellent method for taking notes about team and player fixes needed during the match. Coaches who spend a lot of time writing paper notes are at a

disadvantage because they are head down too much.) Nearly everything you do can be made competitive. For example, if you are teaching an elevator settle with the instep of the foot, start with partners with a ball, one partner providing an underhanded serve to the partner. Quickly move to a situation where the server will pursue down the line of play, and the settler must move the ball off the line of play quickly. Then perhaps play two in the middle and two servers on the ends, alternating server and receiver. Let the second player in the middle push and provide back pressure when it's not her turn, make it a battle. Have winners and losers, and move winners to play winners.

[read the complete article](#)

[read more articles on
management & discipline](#)