

**Over-Coaching: Resist the Urge!**  
**by: Dave Simeone U.S. National Staff Coach**

Most of the sports that are currently predominant in our culture involve the coach as an active participant. Although the coach is along the touchline, in the coaching box or on the bench the opportunity for being overly involved with the players constantly exists. These opportunities are aside from the usual timeouts or substitutions. These typical stoppages in play already contribute too many sports being coach oriented rather than player oriented. Combine the standard loud encouragement (i.e.- screaming & yelling ) with animated cheerleading and you have an excess of over - coaching.

Soccer is different than most sports. The involvement of the coach is secondary to those participating in the game: the players. While coach oriented activities (basketball, baseball, American football) demand, and allow for, a high degree of involvement by the coach during competitive games, soccer is different. It would be more appropriate to contend that soccer coaches do their work and prepare their teams during the week. By the time it comes to the game on Saturday morning it is up to the participants to act, make decisions, and play! It is essential that the youth soccer coach understand their role. If continuous over - involvement during the game is not the best way to assist the players then the coach has a responsibility to alter their behavior and learn to take a different tact. Sports such as baseball and American football are what we would refer to as "set up" sports. Between pitches (baseball) or plays (American football) time and opportunity exists for diagrams to be drawn or the coach to reposition an outfielder. Soccer does not allow for similar stoppages since play is continuous and fairly uninterrupted. Players must be allowed, and ultimately able, to think and make decisions on their own. They must learn to solve problems during the game. This self - sufficient type of thinking necessitates that players learn from the game and utilize any and all information that they receive and process towards finding solutions to the problems they encounter.

**TAKE SOME TIME TO EVALUATE WHETHER YOU MIGHT BE OVER-COACHING.....**

- Do you find that you are hoarse and your voice is strained following a game?
- Is the information that you give your players during half - time emotional but non - specific in terms of assisting them solve the problems they encounter?
- Do you utilize catch phrases such as "suck it up, boys" or "no pain, no gain" in attempting to motivate youngsters?
- Do you find that you are sweating and running just as much during the game as the players?
- Are your pre-game, half time or post-game speeches similar to the president's state of the union address?
- In addressing the players' do you ramble and cause the players to wonder "What's his/her point"?
- Are your remarks and instructions made during the game and to players repetitive and redundant? Is this information general, non-specific jargon and cheerleading altering the player's performance?
- Are you reluctant to allow players to make their own decisions during a game? Are you constantly barraging players with instructions during the game?
- Do you coach in absolutes such as always or never?