

Silent Saturday

What is Silent Saturday?

Silent Saturday is one day out of the entire schedule in which parents, coaches and spectators are not allowed to talk during the game. This may seem like a crazy idea, but this program has met with huge success all over the country, and it is the kids themselves who express the most positive feedback.

Objectives -

- To give the players a chance to trust their skills and instincts and make decisions on the field without input, correction, or criticism from the sidelines.
- To foster leadership skills among the individual players, in allowing them give instruction to each other on the field.
- To foster a true sense of teamwork, as players must learn to work together.
- To remind coaches, parents, and players that *practice* is the time for instruction. Games are where players should be able to showcase what they have learned and put those skills to use.
- To support our referees.

RULES:

- U5/6 - Coaches may verbally coach, however they should keep their directions to a minimum and parents must observe all of the rules of Silent Saturday.
- Coaches may only talk quietly to players on the sidelines, and may give instructions for substitutions. However, coaches should allow the players to decide throw-ins, penalty kicks, corner kicks, etc.
- Parents may not speak to, cheer, encourage, criticize, or direct their players. Think you can't do it? Try bringing a lolly-pop, or gum as a reminder. Bring a few extras to share with others on the sidelines who may be struggling to remain silent. Be polite!
- We encourage parents to make posters, bring pictures of their players, wear t-shirts with their child's name or bring pom-poms. Noise makers can be used to show your support, within reason - please do not bring air-horns and no whistles!
- No addressing the referees! We need to show support for our referees, especially our youth referees by quietly allowing them to do their job, without criticism and heckling.

Feedback -

Feedback about this program around the country has been very positive. Although many parents did not like the initial idea, many reported later that they did enjoy being able to hear the kids communicate on the field and felt pride in watching their kids making undirected good soccer decisions on the field. Coaches have commented how well it helped the kids to increase their communication skills on the field. Players have had the most positive feedback, reporting that they felt less pressured by parents and coaches, and found it more easy to concentrate. They liked being able to make decisions on the field - like who takes the ball out, and who does the goal kick, etc.

Please come to the fields on Saturday prepared to participate and support this policy. Afterward, we would love to hear your observations and comments. Please send your comments to: terribaker1@live.com, with the words: "Silent Saturday" in the subject line.

Thanks for support,