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November 3, 2007 Saturday
SECTION: DESERT TODAY; Pg. 1D HEADLINE:

Behave yourself out on the soccer field

It's Saturday morning, so we know where many of you are headed: The soccer field. Approximately 6,600 youngsters in the Coachella Valley are involved in American Youth Soccer Association (AYSO) activities this season, which means they'll be kicking and passing and high-fiving each other most of the day. They've got the action on the field down pat. But parents, do you know how to act off the field? Here's help. Darrel J Burnett, Ph.D, on the AYSO Region 80 Palm Springs Web site, offers these things kids say they don't want their parents to do from the sidelines.

1. **Don't yell out instructions**. During the game I'm trying to concentrate on what the coach says and working on what I've been practicing. It's easier for me to do my best if you save instructions and reminders for practice or just before the game.

2. **Don't put down the officials**. This embarrasses me and I sometimes wonder whether the official is going to be tougher on me because my parents yell.

3. **Don't yell at me in public**. It will just make things worse because I'll be upset, embarrassed or worried that you're going to yell at me the next time I do something "wrong."

4. **Don't yell at the coach**. When you yell about who gets to play at what position, it just stirs things up and takes away from the fun.

5. **Don't put down my teammates**. Don't make put-down remarks about any of my teammates who make mistakes. It takes away from our team spirit.

6. **Don't put down the other team**. When you do this you're not giving us a very good example of sportsmanship so we get mixed messages about being "good sports."

7. **Don't lecture me about mistakes after the game**. Those rides home in the car after the game are not a good time for lectures about how I messed up - I already feel bad. We can talk later, but please stay calm, and don't forget to mention things I did well during the game!

8. **Don't lose your cool**. I love to see you excited about the game, but there's no reason to get so upset that you lose your temper! It's our game and all the attention is supposed to be on us.

9. **Don't forget how to laugh and have fun**. Sometimes it's hard for me to relax and have fun during the game when I look over and see you so tense and worried.

10. **Don't forget that it's just a game!** Odds are, I'm not going to make a career out of playing sports. I know I may get upset if we lose, but I also know that I'm usually feeling better after we go get pizza. I need to be reminded sometimes that it's just a game.