This was sent along by Manny Sanchez, the Executive Director for the Tennessee State Soccer Association:

15 things to keep in mind while watching from the sidelines:

1. Let the coaches' coach. If you are telling your son or daughter - or any other player for that matter - to do something different from what their coach is telling them, you create distraction and confusion.

2. It is very unnerving for many young players to try and perform difficult tasks on the field on the spur of the moment when parents are yelling at them from the sidelines. Let the kids play. If they have been well coached, they should know what to do on the field. If they make a mistake, chances are they will learn from it.

3. Do not discuss the play of specific young players in front of other parent s. How many times do you hear comments such as, "I don't know how that boy made this team...” or "she's just not fast enough.". Too many parents act as though their child is a 'star', and the problem is someone else’s kid. Negative comments and attitudes are hurtful and totally unnecessary and kill parent harmony, which is often essential to youth team success.

4. Discourage such toxic behavior by listening patiently to any negative comments that might be made, then address issues in a positive way. Speak to the positive qualities of a player, family or coach.

5. Do your level best not to complain about your son or daughter's coaches to other parents. Once that starts, it is like a disease that spreads. Before you know it, parents are talking constantly in a negative way behind a coach's back. (As an aside, if you have what you truly feel is a legitimate beef with your child's coach - either regarding game strategy or playing time, arrange an appointment to meet privately, away from a soccer field.)

6. Make positive comments from the sideline. Be encouraging. Young athletes do not need to be reminded constantly about their perceived errors or mistakes. Their coaches will instruct them, either during the game or at half-time, and during practices. You can often see a young player make that extra effort when they hear encouraging words from the sideline about their hustle.

7. Avoid making any negative comments about players on the other team, this should be simple: we are talking about youngsters, not adults who are being paid to play professionally. I recall being at a rep baseball game some years ago, when parent on one team loudly made comments about errors made by a particular young player on the other team. People on the other side of the diamond were stunned- and angry. Besides being tasteless and classless, these kinds of comments can be hurtful to the young person involved and to their family as well

8. Try to keep interaction with parents on the other team as healthy and positive as possible. Who's kidding whom? You want your child's team to win. So do they. But that should not make us take leave of our senses, especially our common sense. Be courteous 'till it hurts; avoid the ’tit for tat' syndrome.

9. Parents on the 'other' team are not the enemy. Neither are the boys or girl s on the other team. We should work to check any negative feelings at the door before we hit the pitch.

10. What is the easiest thing to do in the youth sports world? Criticize the referees. Oh, there are times when calls are missed, absolutely. And that can, unfortunately, directly affect the outcome of a contest. That said, by and large those who officiate at youth soccer games are hardly over-compensated, and give it an honest - and often quite competent - effort. At worst, they at least try to be fair and objective.

11. On that note, outbursts from parents on the sideline made toward the referees only signal to our on children on the field that they can blame the refs for anything that goes wrong. Blaming others is not a formula
for success in sports.

12. Yelling out comments such as "Good call, ref" or "Thanks ref" may only serve to alienate an official. The ref always assumes they made the proper call, that's why they made it. Trying to show superficial support because the call went 'your' way is simply annoying to the officials, and to anyone within earshot.

13. Walking up and down all game long along the sidelines, following the play, is unnerving to players and totally unnecessary- particularly so if you are trying to yell out instructions to various players, including your own son or daughter. It is likely embarrassing to the player/players involved and simply counterproductive. If you want to coach, obtain your coaching certification and then apply for a job.

14. We all feel things and are apt to be tempted to say things in the 'heat of the moment'. But we don't excuse athletes for doing inappropriate things in the 'heat of the moment' (there are penalties, suspensions, etc.) so we should apply similar standards to our own sideline behavior. Quickly check yourself and ask: Will I be proud of what I am about to say or do when I reflect on it tomorrow?

15. The parking lot is not the time to 'fan the flames'. Whether it is a coach's decision, a referee's call, a comment that was made, let it go. Don't harass the coach, or an official, or a parent on the other team after the game is over. Go home, relax, and unwind. Talk positively with your child. The ride home is sometimes as important as the game itself. Make that time a good memory for your son or daughter by discussing as many positives as you can about him/her, her coach, her teammates, etc