



WINNING ON GAMEDAY

A Guide for Parents

FOUNDATION

Considerations for Before, During and After the Game

1. Prioritise Sleep

Your child getting a good night's sleep before a game will lead to improved performance, development, and well-being. During sleep, the body repairs muscles, builds bone, and releases growth hormones - critical for young athletes.

2. Pre-Game Nutrition & Hydration

A healthy meal of simple carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats will aid in performance. Limit excessive dairy, fats and fibre and be sure to have that big meal a couple of hours before kick-off. Don't underestimate the importance of hydration.

3. A Calm Out the Door Experience

Consider an "Out the Door Checklist" to limit last minute stress and be sure your child has accounted for their kit and during-game hydration ahead of time. A calm, not rushed, out the door experience will help your child excel.

4. A Send-Off Tradition

Traditions provide children with a strong emotional foundation and are an opportunity to teach values and encourage behaviours. Come up with three key words you want your child to remember as they head off to their teammates and remind them of this every game such as "Work Hard, Have Fun, Be a Leader!"

5. Supportive Sidelines

Remember the three types of sideline behaviour and start to classify your behaviour during games.

Supportive, Distracting and Hostile

Supportive Sidelines are filled with praise and encouragement at the appropriate times, not while your child is in the middle of concentrating or performing. Eliminate distracting and hostile behaviour such as yelling or coaching during a match.

Examples of Supportive Behaviour:

"Good Work!" "Great Effort!"
"Keep Trying Hard!" "Go Red Team!"



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6. Be Consistent with Your Emotion

Find consistent emotion during the game: not too excited after good play or too upset after a goal against or a mistake. What your child needs to know is that you support their football participation and believe in them; your consistent presence can give them the reassurance they need to perform at their best.

7. Respect Referees

Referees are human and deserve the respect of spectators, coaches and players. When you respect the decision of the referees instead of complaining, you are teaching players to control what they can control and this can lead to the development of a high performance growth mindset.

8. Let Your Child Lead the Car Ride Home

Maybe your child will want to talk about the game or maybe they will want to listen to music. Give them the space they want, and understand they may feel differently after each game. Check out the CAR RIDE HOME CONSIDERATIONS for more support.

9. Recovery Matters

Children need to physically and mentally recover after a game.

Physically: Make sure they hydrate, cool-down, eat a balanced post-game snack or meal with carbohydrates and protein, and get the sleep they need!

Mentally: Make sure they have an opportunity to reflect and prioritise time for stress relief like music or free play with friends in order to promote emotional balance.

Additional Resources for Parents:

- Car Ride Home Considerations
- Sideline Behaviour Best Practices
- Difficult Conversation Framework

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