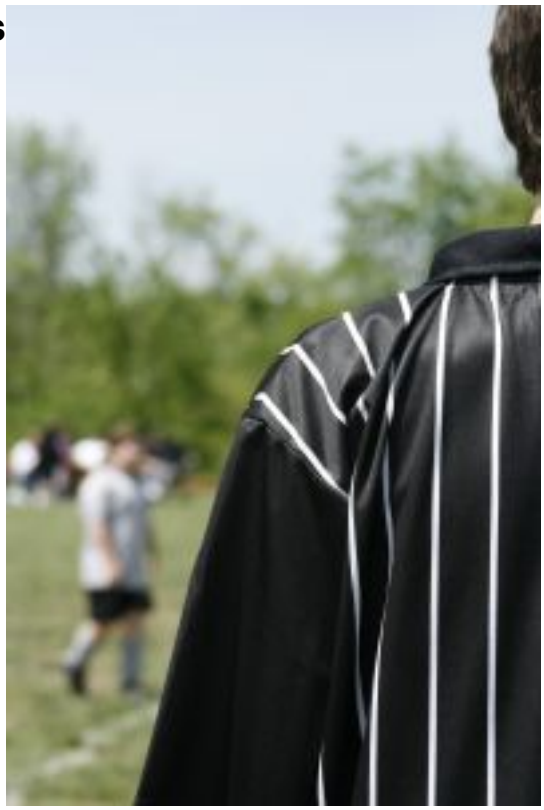
Spectator Parents



Poor sportsmanship on the part of some parents is hard to ignore and can make it seem as if all parents are guilty. It puts a damper on the game for the rest of the spectators, the kids, and the refs. Ask any kid over the age of six whom he learns his manners from and he'll say, "My parents."

As a parent, be the spectator you want your child to be.

- *Leave coaching to the coach.* Aggressive sideline coaching sets a bad example for all children, undermines their confidence, and can actually harm performance.

- *Don't criticize referees and judges.* Even if you think the ref was completely off base, keep the criticism to yourself and don't convey your hostile feelings to your child.

- *Compliment the opposition.* Showing your appreciation for the other side isn't a betrayal of your own child but simply and essential part of sportsmanship and good manners.

- *Steer clear of tantrum-throwing parents.* You can't reason with a furious parent, but if you know the person, you may want to speak with him about his behavior at a calmer time.

- *Talk with your child.* If your child has witnessed poor parental behavior, take some time

on the way home to talk about it.

- *Point out good role models.* Whenever you watch televised events or attend live competitions with your child, point out the positive role models: those who follow the rules, even when it penalizes their team or score; those who win and lose graciously.

Respect the Ref

Referees have a tough job. A baseball umpire, for example, makes around 150 calls each game. If he makes 3 that are questionable, he gets ripped apart by the fans, even though 3 out of 150 is a 98% success rate. Let's let them do their jobs.