

'The Silent Quarter'

An Idea Worth Trying

By Arlyn Clarkson, Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association

Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association President Arlyn Clarkson included the following story as part of his remarks in the December 1995 issue of the Washington Soccer Post. This reprint is offered here as a potential aid to help our "mature adults" assess their own behavior on the sidelines of their children's games.

There was a match between two U10 teams. The coaches agreed to an experiment. They would play four quarters. In the first and third quarters, the coaches and parents would not yell at the players. The only thing that could be said was "nice job", "way to go" and "good". In the second and fourth quarters, it was back to "normal sideline behavior".

The match started in the first quarter, and the players played the game, even making passes to open teammates. Players seemed to find the open area, and go for it. Defenders started to anticipate what was being attempted. Players talked to each other, and they communicated what was going on.

When the second period started and the yelling started, players stopped moving. They became timid, and slow in reacting. The smiles were gone. There was no help or talk between each other.

The third period started, and the players stood still; it took about two minutes before the match started to be fun. Again players smiled, laughed and played. Goals were scored, and goals were saved, players made good passes, and defenders got to the areas that needed them. At the end of the period, players came off the field with smiles, and laughter, and joy.

Here comes the fourth period. The yelling started, and the players' style of play changed again. There was no talking between each other on the field; in fact, now there was yelling and criticism on the pitch. When the match ended, the players came off the field -- not happy that they had played a match, but fearful of what was going to be said next.

Think about it !!!

Try it with your team !!!

Age does not matter.