

Top Ten Spectacular Ways to Make Kids Quit Soccer by [Jerry Macnamara](#)

Soccer, with its almost 19 million participants, has enjoyed a meteoric rise over the past twenty-five years in the United States. It is a problematic issue for established national pastimes like baseball, football and basketball. Uncovering a potential chink in the armor of soccer, we have compiled this list to slow its growth. But, this list is dependent upon parents and coaches to do the right thing to stop soccer. Here are the Top Ten Spectacular Ways Parents and Coaches Can Make Kids Quit Soccer:

- 1. Lose your Perspective.** Stand on the sidelines and complain about the coach. Plot ways to get your kid onto the best team. If it doesn't go your way, change teams. Blame it on the coach. Call every coach you know proclaiming your player's greatness and setting up the next three years of his life.
- 2. Lose your Composure.** Yell at the coach. Yell at the referee. Yell at the fourteen year old flag runner. Yell at the field. Yell at the wind. Being "that parent" and embarrassing your child will almost certainly lead to dropout. Awesome!
- 3. Count Everything.** While soccer doesn't lend itself to statistics, there are certain self-appointed statisticians who will track and distribute every known stat they can imagine. Unfortunately, it doesn't equate to player development or enjoyment. It does, on the other hand, provide fodder for all disgruntled parents to explain how "Jimmy" shouldn't be on the field based around his plus / minus ratio.
- 4. Add Pressure.** Tell your kid that the reason you are driving them all over Timbuktu is to make sure they score a college scholarship. Yep, that will certainly enhance the enjoyment and provide for a relaxing atmosphere to grow and develop as a player. College is years away!
- 5. Specialize Early.** If you're going to score the big scholarship for your child, then they need to become serious earlier. And, they need to play year round. If they can play "up" instead of growing and developing with their friends, this is better because they'll be more focused. Good job, Mr. Burnout. Here comes Johnny Quitter.
- 6. Sports First.** Family, friends and being a kid second. Not only did you lose last match, but your ball possession stats were off too! Get in the backyard and practice! You need the work. No hanging downtown for ice cream and friends until you've reached five thousands touches in the next hour. Your friends will wait.
- 7. Win. Win. And, Win.** Lose sight of the real importance of soccer to development of young people. Stress winning at all costs, tips to cheat the system and disrespecting the hated opponent. This is a war, not a game. Keep that determination. Forget about all the wonderful, lasting lessons soccer can teach youth: commitment, dedication, hard work, sportsmanship and teamwork – to name a few of the millions of potential lessons.
- 8. Practice. Practice. And, Practice.** Make practices long and boring. Constantly do drills until they get it right. Forget about creatively addressing skill development. And, of course, take out small sided games and scrimmages. Those are just a waste of time.
- 9. Mix Punishment with Mistakes.** Coaches who use punishment as a method to correct mistakes are missing the point. A missed pass doesn't require push ups. It requires more practice. They'll never get the pass right if they're too busy doing pushups, or sprints or jumping jacks. A fantastic item on the Top 10 and a sure way to crush a spirit and stunt growth.
- 10. Fun? This is fun?!** Soccer isn't supposed to be fun. Soccer is about the scholarship. It's about winning. It's about blaming everyone else. Most importantly, it about my status in the community as coach of the undefeated U7 Tiger Sharks this season. Yep. That'll do it.

We've penned this ridiculous Top Ten list as a reminder that the goal of any sport is to turn the kids onto the game and to let them have fun. Sometimes, as adults, we lose that focus. Give the game back to the kid