



Why do we go to watch our kids play? What motivates parents at minor youth sporting events? After spending countless hours watching hundreds of games over the years, I am often left scratching my head. Some adults in the stands continuously feel that they have to offer their opinions on the state of affairs on their kids' team. As a parent once mentioned to me "It is becoming increasingly aggravating to be in hockey arenas these days regardless of where one is sitting or standing. Everybody has forgotten that minor hockey is just that....MINOR. It is annoying to constantly hear parents berate the players, coaches and referees from the stands and hallways". Just as bad are the ones that whisper to each other about the shortcomings of this that and the other. What folks fail to realize is that NEGATIVITY breeds NEGATIVITY. Perhaps that is the goal of some. I can't really explain it because I have a hard time understanding the behavior.

Let's start by asking ourselves, why do our kids play the game of hockey? Why do they and we as parents make the daily sacrifices? Is it the possibility of one day playing in the show? For some, that's one of the reasons they play. Is it for the chance of playing Junior or College? Getting that elusive scholarship? Well for some that may be a reason. Personally, I honestly believe that the majority of the kids playing do so because of their love of the game. They compete because they want to, and because there is nothing that they'd rather do. Our children play the game because they are passionate about it. Once that passion is gone they QUIT.

Well somewhere along the way, we the adults have forgotten the reasons that they have chosen to play the game. We tend to focus on the reasons we want them to play. Oh sure we all verbalize that it's about having fun and staying healthy and camaraderie. But hang around the arenas long enough and you quickly realize that somewhere we've lost touch with reality.

Here is a sampling of some of the things heard in arenas over the years:

- 1) What's wrong with that kid, why didn't he pass the puck my son was open.
- 2) Is this coach %^&\$#@ crazy putting that kid on the ice while we have a penalty.
- 3) Hey ref what's the problem...you can't %\$#@* see.
- 4) Man my child gets short -shifted all the time ...he played 50 seconds and the other line played 60 seconds.
- 5) Look at that moron...he can not even skate....why don't his parents invest in some power-skating.
- 6) You know, if this coach really wanted to win he'd double shift my son.
- 7) I don't understand this coach, why isn't he playing his best players on defence so we can win.
- 8) I don't understand this coach why doesn't he play his 2 best forwards at center and double shift them.
- 9) Do you have the phone number for the statistician; they didn't credit my son with an assist.
- 10) Why is the coach putting those players on during a penalty killing...they are our weakest ones.
- 11) When is this coach going to start working on positioning and break outs, doesn't he realize this is NOVICE A now.
- 12) Why is my son stuck with the weakest players on his line.
- 13) Why is my son stuck with those 2 pylons.

Well by now you get my point.

A few years ago the MONTREAL GAZETTE published a story about how many players actually make it to the NHL.....unfortunately NOT MANY! 600,000 children play minor hockey in Canada. There are about 700 players in the NHL....Do the math!!

There are many of us who truly enjoy the game for what it is....a game. Let's stop wasting energy on things that we shouldn't be worried about. A long time coach once put it this way: "Before approaching a coach about a problem, make sure it is the kids problem and not the parents problem"

Often parents are fuming over stupidities while the kids are laughing and smiling in the room. When your kids are playing, just let them play. Remind and encourage them to have fun and to give everything they've got while they still can. It is not important what the others do or who is better, it's important to give your best. By doing so, they'll play the game of hockey and they'll leave the game of hockey without any regrets and perhaps they'll be better athletes, better students, and better grow to be a better person. In the end, that's all you can ask.

I leave you with some motherly advice passed on a few years ago..... if it is UN-KIND UN-TRUE or UN-NECESSARY then KEEP QUIET!!!