

Coaching Outside the Box: Changing the Mindset in Youth Soccer by Richard Shaw and Paul Mairs

Richard Shaw and Paul Mairs have written this bestselling book for parents and coaches to help develop, nurture, and inspire young players throughout the world.

The book concludes with a section allowing parents to “instantly identify” whether or not a club or coach is truly placing emphasis on player development with their child, or whether the club or coach is taking the conventional approach and focusing primarily on winning and immediate team success at the expense of young player’s experiences and progress.

This also helps establish whether parents are facilitating positive learning environment, or whether the development progress is being disrupted due to misguided actions or beliefs. Here are the ‘red flags’ identified by Shaw and Mairs that arise when this developmentally destructive approach is taken...

- A coach or parent demonstrates noticeable anger or frustration when the team gives up a goal or displays too much jubilation when their team scores.
- The coach consistently approaches games with winning as the main objective.
- The coach consistently hypes up the importance of game results with big pre-game speeches.
- A coach or parent spends significant amounts of time analyzing the team or player’s performance after a game.
- A coach or parent displays anger or frustration because the team lost.
- The club consistently promotes winning results and trophy success on their website.
- A coach or parent constantly shouts, directs, and instructs players from the sidelines.
- A coach or parent deals with mistakes negatively through scolding, making critical comments or being sarcastic, and/or expressing anger.
- The coach ‘pigeonholes’ players into positions week after week.
- The more advanced players are always positioned in central areas of the field where they have the greatest impact on the game.
- The coach consistently attempts to hide the less advanced players in positions where there is less chance they will be engaged in the play e.g. wide areas of the field.
- The coach consistently offers the more advanced players greater percentages of playing time.
- The coach leaves the less advanced players on the sidelines for long periods.
- The coach promotes a “fight for your place’ mentality between players.

- The coach has a '3 goal player' who only plays if the team is up by 3 goals or losing by 3 goals due to the game's impending conclusion.
- A club, coach, or parent espouses the idea that every player needs to play against the 'best players' or 'best competition' in order to develop effectively.
- The coach has the entire playing up in age group even though some players are unready for that level of challenge.
- A player who demonstrates advanced capabilities is denied a more stimulating challenge which meets his or her progressive needs.
- The coach never offers players the opportunity to have input or share their perspective.
- A club, coach, or parent goes to great length to recruit players.
- You are handed a "You have been identified" card by a coach or club representative.
- A club utilizes tryout procedures in an attempt to identify players who can bring them immediate success.
- The coach repeatedly intervenes during training sessions and talks for long spells of time.
- The coach subjects players to prolonged inactive spells during training, often due to their standing in line.
- To improve the team's chances of winning their next game, the coach focuses on team tactics and concepts during training, e.g. corner kicks, set-plays, off-side traps.
- During training the coach consistently attempts to implement complicated skills that the players are clearly unready for.
- The coach discards or neglects a player because the player does not display favorable physical characteristics.
- A coach or parent makes a subjective assumption about a young player's future success in the game.
- A club, coach, or parent promotes tournaments as a critical requirement take players to the 'next level'.
- A club administrator or coach tells you not to read 'Coaching Outside the Box'!