

Coach Says; Players/Parents Hear

Coaches often feel as if their instructions are somehow scrambled and reworded by the time they reach the ears of their players and parents. For example:

- Coach says: “Bring your equipment to practice.” Kid hears: “If your equipment happens to be in the car, bring it. If not, don’t worry about it. Certainly, do not go out of your way to actually look for it in your house.”
- Coach says: “Pack a bag with your light and dark jerseys, extra socks, your warm-ups and your water bottle.” Kid hears: “Grab your shoes and hop in the car.”
- Coach says: “Ask your parents to help with the concession stand” Kids hear: “If anyone has absolutely nothing else to do, the concession needs to be taken care of. But probably somebody else will do it.”
- Coach says: “You are expected at practice unless there is illness or an emergency.” Kid hears: “Practice days are a good time to schedule appointments because you know it is a free day.”
- Coach says: “Dress for the weather.” Kid hears: “Don’t worry about extra clothes. If you start to get chilly, I’ll end practice early.”
- Coach says: “Arrive 45 minutes before game time.” Kid hears: “Leave your house 30 minutes before game time, and wait until you are in the car to figure out where the game is and how to get there. Don’t worry about traffic – all those drivers will get out of you way when you honk your horn.”
- Coach says: “Have all the parts to your uniform.” Kid hears: “It really doesn’t matter if your socks match and you are wearing last year’s jersey.”
- Coach says: “Parents, do not yell continually throughout the game at the referees.” Parents hear: “Make sure you call these infractions to the ref’s attention every time you think they occur. It does not really matter if you are right or wrong. It is important for the refs to know that you are watching their every move.”
- Coach says: “Parents, do not try to coach you child from the bleachers or sidelines.” Parents hear: “It really helps if you yell a lot at your child during the game because kids are so willing to do what their parents tell them especially in front of their peers.”
- Coach says: “We practice rain or shine.” Kinds and parents hear: “On practice days, I want every person on the team to call my house at the first drop of rain and every half-hour thereafter.”