



# Tip Of The Week

## COMMUNICATION & THE GAME

### COMMUNICATION - How Important Is It To The Game?

How important is communication in the game of soccer? Where does it start?

How is communication presented and how is communication perceived by the coach, the player, the parent, the official?

The old saying “timing is everything” just may be a good start point when opening up conversation about communication in the game.

Communication where and when?

<b>On the field</b>	<b>Off the field</b>	<b>Pre-Game</b>	<b>During the Game</b>	<b>Following the Game</b>
<b>Pre-Season</b>	<b>Mid-Season</b>	<b>Post-Season</b>	<b>When Pressure is on</b>	<b>When there is time to play</b>
<b>Practice</b>	<b>Technically</b>	<b>Tactically</b>	<b>When basic info is needed</b>	<b>On the sidelines</b>
<b>Verbal</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>To clarify</b>	<b>Enforcing laws of the game</b>	<b>Position on field</b>
<b>To simplify</b>	<b>Body Language</b>	<b>Terminology</b>	<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Key Coaching Points</b>

Just how should we communicate as a coach, parent, player, official?

Whether bringing a player off the field and a coach explains how to fix a situation so the player understands, or simply a verbal KEY trigger that allows the player to adjust on the field we start to appreciate how clear, concise and simple communication needs to be. At the same time we should start to realize just how complex communication is when we grasp how important it is to successful outcomes.

Instructions and communication relayed to the players through the Goalkeeper depending on the play – ie, playing the ball out from the back four can be very effective if the information relayed is correct and at the right time. A Coach that helps the GK find their voice at the right time when it is most important will experience a positive tactical team outcome through communications.

Recognizing how important the correlation between correct delivery and the timing of communication , we should also understand what types of communication may be needed.

When players become technically better in the game this allows for communication in a way that can open the game . The message in a pass is communicated when eye contact is made between player making the pass and player receiving the pass. The player receiving the pass communicates where the ball should be distributed – to feet or to space simply by how they position their body . It is the coach’s responsibility to educate and train players technically so communication is a natural flow of the game.

Terminology (soccer) needs to be clear and consistent to the player so when a player hears a trigger phrase it is understood and they can adjust to the game as required. If a player moves to another team the terminology should remain the same. The coach must constantly engage in learning with an open mind. A coach must understand and use terminology consistently.

When the parent communicates it often starts at home or in the car / travel to the game and of course during the game while the player is on the field. If a parent is reliving the game through their child, they either need to start coaching to re-experience their dream or step back and Respect the game.

Respect for the coach, player and the game from the parent is necessary. Respecting your coach will help the coach to communicate positively and effectively , because it allows a child the freedom to absorb coaches instructions without confusion or mixed messages . It allows the player the freedom to try new things on their own and to experience success and failure with a view to learn at a time when it is critical in their development. Parents become great team players when they communicate positively and respect the game.

When the official communicates they are perceived as the law and come complete with a knowledge of the game through the interpretation of the Laws of the Game per FIFA . Experience and knowledge about the game will help officials to officiate and communicate in a way that allows the game to flow. A sincere approach with confidence and knowledge of the laws and the understanding of level and age of the players will go a long way to projecting successful outcomes for all.

So how important is communication?

- A coach that attends licencing courses will soon learn that communication will make or break their success on course.
- The player who cannot communicate on the field of play may never experience the joy that the game can truly bring when played the way it can be.
- The official who cannot communicate with flexibility at various levels of the game may never truly experience the feeling of success when walking off the field at the end of a game.
- A parent may only ever see the game through their own childhood experiences and miss out on the opportunity to share and celebrate in their child’s success and achievements

Sadly some coaches/ parents / players / officials may never understand that communication plays such an important part. Perception and opinions are like smoke screens and can prevent the coach / parent / player/ official from experiencing game reality.

**Quote:** *‘The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place’.* **George Bernard Shaw**