Soccer Burnout is Real!

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Background:

The following is from coach Greg Gibson. The points it brings up are real and significant. While it can be argued that the more match experience a player has the better they will become, players also can become “burnt out”. This results is poorer performance, lack of desire, and—in the worst case scenario—quitting soccer completely.

For Parents:

Soccer burnout for parents is the obvious example because travel soccer demands so much of your resources (irreplaceable time and hard earned money). Now, many of us think this is a good investment of both but it can still be stressful, especially if your family has multiple kids doing sports at the same time. It is even more stressful if those activities that force the family to different geographical locations. Furthermore, a high number of tournaments means fewer free weekends . Even after the end of a successful season, many parents are “done” with soccer.

What to do? As we say in the military flying community “come up voice” and talk to your coach or direct message (DM) them. Let them know what’s going on. The earlier they know about an issue, the more readily they can mitigate or adapt to it with roster changes etc. Perhaps they can help with transport arrangements or have find a way for your player to stay with another parent that you are good with. It is not uncommon at all for parents to help each other out that way. If you or your player needs a day or two off from training, take it! If your coach asks why, just be direct. They very much respect and appreciate that.

Bottom Line, the club respects your time and resources and, of course/obviously, you know best how to use them.

For kids:

This is the tough one because many kid athletes are “soccer! Soccer! Soccer!” and you cannot imagine them “burning out,” but it absolutely can happen (see linked article below). Kids burnout mainly because they stop having fun. Coaches should do everything possible to make sure your player is having fun because we know that all the amount of soccer development is utterly meaningless if they stop playing or do not want to play next year. Our attitudes, atmosphere we set (i.e. music, tone of voice) and lesson plans are designed to keep your players interested and engaged while learning….many times they do not even realize that they are learning! Winning is also fun, but as I (coach Gibson) have stated many times before, that’s not my main focus. YOUR player’s individual improvement and love of the game is the focus. With that mission, then we will always be successful, regardless of our win/loss/draw record.

Young athletes can also burnout through injury and/or exhaustion. Even at this age, your players can become sore or have repetitive use injuries. There is NO SCENARIO where a coach should put your player’s health over anything else. Sometimes it is difficult to diagnose kids’ injuries because they usually do not communicate their pains/ailments well but if you feel that your player needs to stop playing match/training session or needs to take some time off to heal, then absolutely do that.

For more information, you can google “soccer burnout” and have a plethora of articles to choose from. One of my favorites is this one:

<http://res.dallasnews.com/interactives/club-sports/part2/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yr1vKDMHpQo>

Another favorite article is about knee injuries in female athletes (its 4-6 times higher than in men!)

<http://www.sportsmd.com/knee-injuries/preventing-acl-injuries-anterior-knee-pain-female-athletes/>