ENERGIZERS/ATTENTION-GRABBERS

Effectively managing time and behavior is essential to delivering a successful practice session. “Energizers” and “Attention-Grabbers” are important tools in managing the practice experience. Introduce these tools in the beginning of the season and reinforce them throughout the season. Incorporate them before and after activities, and to assist with water and snack breaks. Suggested Energizers/Attention-Grabbers are below — also feel free to create your own!

TO BRING ATTENTION TO YOU:

**Volume Pinnie:** Coach tosses a pinnie in the air, players yell as loud as possible, but go silent when the pinnie hits the ground.

**Clap It Out:** Say “If you can hear me clap once, if you can hear me clap twice, if you can hear me clap three times.” After the third clap, players know to have their attention on you.

**Give Me Five:** Hold up your hand and say “Give me five.” The players put their hands in the air and shout “five!” As they count down, they get progressively quieter so “one” is said in a whisper.


Attention-Grabber courtesy of D.C. United Foundation!

TO ACCOMPLISH TASKS QUICKLY:

**Countdown:** Say “You have 10 seconds to put the balls in the bag and sit in a circle. Let’s see if you can do it! 10…9…8…”

TO CONTROL ACTIVITY WITHIN A DESIGNATED AREA:

**Freeze:** When the coach says “Freeze!” players stop moving and find the coach with their eyes.

**Ball on Me:** When the coach says “Ball on me,” players ignore the out-of-bounds ball and find the new ball coach plays in.

TO RESOLVE CONFLICT/MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT BIAS:

**Rock, Paper, Scissors:** “Rock” is a fist, “paper” is a flat hand, and “scissors” are the pointer and middle fingers making snipping motions. Partners shake their fists 3 times, and then show their chosen motion on the count of 3. Winning hands are decided as follows: Rock breaks scissors, scissors cut paper, paper covers rock.

**Coin Toss:** Bring a coin with you to practice. Designate 1 player from 1 team to call “heads” or “tails.” If the player calls “heads” and the coin lands with the head face-up, that player/team gets their preference.

TO REINFORCE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR: (BE SURE TO SPOTLIGHT EACH PLAYER THROUGHOUT THE SEASON):

**Caught Being Good:** If you see a player doing something good, say “You are caught being good!” and state what the player did.

**Prized Possession:** Designate a prized possession, ex., a specific pinnie, a professional jersey, a captain’s band, and bring it to practice every day. When a player has done something good, they get to wear the prized possession.

TO CHECK-IN WITH THE TEAM EMOTIONALLY AND MENTALLY:

**Thumbs Up or Down:** Ask players to show how they are feeling by doing a thumbs up (feeling good), thumbs down (feeling bad), or thumbs sideways (feeling okay).

**Start “the Wave”**: Have one player start by waving their arms and shouting, then each subsequent player waves their arms and shouts. The wave should rotate around the circle several times. State that players can give big waves if they are high energy, and little waves if they are low energy.

**Show Me Your Muscles:** Ask players to pose like body builders. State that players can pose with the arms up if pumped up, or pose with arms down if feeling less enthusiastic.

While facilitating any of these, scan the group, taking note of any players that are low energy. Make a mental note (don’t single an individual player out in the group setting). Check in with this player individually, if warranted.