



Silent Sidelines

The idea behind silent sidelines is to allow players to control their own game, to make decisions for themselves and to show adults on the sideline that they can show their approval through the silent gesture of clapping. While instructions and cheers from the sideline are mainly positive they confuse players and don't allow them to think for themselves. Learning by doing, including making mistakes is key to their long-term development. In addition, it's an opportunity to show spectators that it's not necessary to continually shout on the sideline; it's their game, let them play.

Suggested 'How to set up the event...'

- CWO acts as 'silent sidelines' coordinator
- Pick a day that minis and youths teams are playing at home
- Advertise on club's website, social media etc. and let parents know through what's App, etc.
- Use IRFU pavement signs to reinforce your message
- Highlight instructions for the day through website, flyer, social media, etc.
- Head coach can give instructions at the start of the match but after the first 5-mins there is no instruction from the sideline. Coaching staff can speak to the players at half time only
- Parents and other adults can applaud – they are encouraged to applaud good play by both teams
- Adults can cheer when a try is scored
- Referee can speak to the players
- Consider roping off sections of the sideline and have an area for parents where they can stand back and observe the game
- Players communicate among themselves and make decisions about the game among themselves – they can seek assistance from the referee if in doubt about something
- Young minis may need additional direction from the head coach and/or referee but should be given some time to work it out for themselves before adult intervention
- If the opposition doesn't agree to get involved, don't worry; use it as an opportunity to observe sideline behaviour – reflect on it – is it beneficial to the players? What did your club learn?

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WHAT THE PLAYERS SAID IN IRELAND

- "It was much better because we could hear each other talk and we were much more organised"
- "We played better as a team and we had more confidence in how we were playing."
- "Great, get to try stuff without the coach roaring at you."
- "Loved it, more relaxing."
- "Found it difficult cos the coaches couldn't tell us what to do when we made mistake"
- "If your fathers there he doesn't start yelling at you"
- "Good, the coaches weren't telling us what to do. Sometimes we need a helping hand but not all the time and we figured it out for ourselves."
- "Thought it was better cos we didn't have the pressure of doing what the coaches tell us to do"

WHAT THE COACHES SAID

"Thanks for a great day today. Our U10s really enjoyed it and are the better players for the experience. We're probably all better coaches for the Silent Sidelines experience. It made me focus on the game more and on retaining points to pass on to players when they had a break. Hopefully it encourages the players to work more as a team and to think for themselves. Always good to have something new brought to the table, many thanks for taking the plunge".

"The experience was very interesting and that they were able to see the bigger match picture having stepped back from micro-managing each play, they felt they were able to give better feedback to the team as a whole because of it".

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