

**1 | Sideline Confrontation**

In a crucial situation near the end of a tight game against a strong opponent, the official makes a call against your team that appears wrong. Two parents of your players, outraged by the call, begin to yell at the officials. Your team loses narrowly. The parents continue to scream at the official while your players look to you expectantly. As a Double-Goal Coach, what should you do?

As bad as things are, they can get much worse. Your first priority is reining in your outraged parents. And I do mean “your” parents.

Parents come with players, and it is your responsibility to shape their behavior as well as that of your players. Here’s how:

- If you have an assistant coach, have him take players to a meeting place away from the field. If you are the only coach present, ask your captains to gather the team at a meeting place and wait for you there.
- Approach the yelling parents to quiet them down. Be firm without causing any further escalation. “I need you to leave the officials alone right now!”
- Empathize with the parents while reminding them that they are violating your team culture of Honoring the Game. “I know that was a tough call to take, but I need you to stop and set an example for our team.” If Honoring the Game is part of your team culture, remind them now. “Remember, we’re a team that Honors the Game. We’ve got to live up to that now.”
- Thank the officials. If you agree that the bad call may have cost your team the game, this may be hard, but it would be a big Honoring-the-Game statement. “Thank you for officiating today. I know this is often a thankless job. I want you to know I will speak to my parents to make sure they don’t act this way in the future.”

- Address your team, ideally within earshot of the parents so you can talk to them through your remarks to the players. This is a great time to remind your players that they played a good game. Don’t let the controversial call overshadow their great effort. “We had a tough call at the end of the game, but I was proud of the way you kept competing. In life we don’t always get the right calls, but competitors don’t whine about it – they refocus on the next play. And that’s what you did today.”
- End by recommitting to Honoring the Game. “We’re a team that shows respect for officials even when they mess up. Thank you for not harping on them today.”
- Before the next game, talk to the parents in question to ensure they are prepared to behave themselves in the future. Wait for the emotion to dissipate, but do talk with them so they know you expect them to Honor the Game in the future.

Developing Winners in Sports and Life

# THE POWER OF DOUBLE-GOAL COACHING



By Jim Thompson

Foreword by Phil Jackson



BETTER ATHLETES  
BETTER PEOPLE

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