

## **SECRETS OF THE MIND part two: An encouraging half-time team talk**

By [David Clarke](#)

Children's minds are funny things. It is quite easy for them to think "oh well, we've lost this one" after only a few minutes of play. But it is just as easy to talk them into believing they can go on and win a game.

This is why the half-time team talk is so vital to soccer coaching. Especially if you are losing. You may have to talk your players back into a game, or keep their confidence levels high if they are winning. What you must do in all situations is: ENCOURAGE, ENCOURAGE, ENCOURAGE.

Make sure you the coach and only one other person talks. The half time team talk should be short. The team should be sat down, quiet, given a drink and told one or two main points that they can take in praise for something they are doing right, then the things they are doing wrong and how to put them right - this is the central point of the half time talk.

Use your whole body not and just your mouth, positive body attitude is crucial.

Praise them straight away. Pick up one or two things they have done very well before you remind them about the things they haven't. Don't get on their backs but give them something to think about.

Play your game. So you're losing 2-0 to a side you should be beating. Your players are all talking about the tall kid who's constantly pushing. The skilful boy on the wing is worrying your defender.....

Quieten them down, tell them to forget the opposition and to focus on what they do best week in and week out. Point out that if they keep passing the ball, shielding it, throwing it, the chances will come and they will get back into the game.

Remind your players to enjoy having the ball, there's only half a match left for play. Tell them to "play your game" which will instil the confidence and teamwork your coaching has developed.

### **Advice to give just before they go back on the pitch:**

Pick one or two points:

- Remind players to be aware of their surroundings
- Anticipate where the ball is going
- Be aware of team-mates' positions
- Close down and mark the opposition players
- Tell the dribblers to dribble and shooters to shoot
- Encourage your goalie, don't criticise - leave that for later

Make the speech clear and effective. Don't cover all the points mentioned here, make two or three points you want to get across. Don't be tempted with "and another thing"...