

WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

HOW TO SURVIVE A SOCCER SATURDAY



Stay positive.

Refrain from criticizing your child's gameplay or the skills of the other children. Shout only supportive comments, such as "Good header" or "Nice shot." Lead the other parents in group cheers.



Focus on the game.

Do not gossip with the other parents or talk on your cell phone.



Do not criticize your child's coach.

Don't worry about how much playing time your child gets or criticize the coach's strategy.



Let the referee make the calls.

Refrain from yelling "Offside" and "Hand ball!" Support the referee no matter what calls he makes.



Bring healthful treats.

Fruit or trail mix makes the best refreshment for tired players, siblings, and parents. Bring a cooler with sports drinks, including water.



Bring folding chairs and extra clothing.

"Camp" folding chairs are appropriate but chaise longues are not. In sunny weather, pack hats and sun block. In cold weather, bring blankets and extra jackets.

Be Aware

- Know the rules: A player is “offside” (not “off-sides”) when she is nearer to the other team’s goal line than two of the opposing players and when the ball touches or is played by one of her teammates. For determining an offside penalty, the ball counts as a “player” on the opposing team. The rule prevents players from hanging around the other team’s goal. The consequence for a player being caught offside is the loss of possession.
- To cut down on annoying chatter, bring lollipops, jawbreakers, or other candy that takes a long time to dissolve. Pass them out to fans of both the home and away team. The visiting team will be impressed by your team’s friendliness and may conduct themselves in a more civil manner. In any event, everyone’s mouth will be occupied.

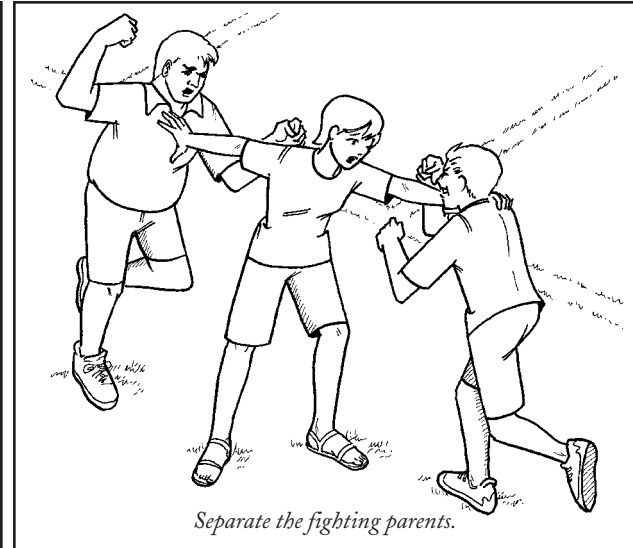
HOW TO BREAK UP A FIGHT

1 Talk the parents down.

Do not yell; speak in a low, even tone and show understanding. Instruct the fighting parents to cease and desist. Call them by name, if you know their names. Remind the parents that they are setting a bad example for their children.

2 Prepare to intercede.

If the parents continue to fight, enlist the aid of another, preferably large, parent. Take off glasses, jewelry, or high heels. Disperse any audience that has



Separate the fighting parents.



Use water bottles to distract the fighters.

gathered. The fighters may feel a need to continue or save face if they are in front of a crowd.

3 Step between the fighting parents.

Position yourself in the middle of the fray. Extend your arms straight out to either side to push the parents as far from each other as possible. Continue to speak to the fighters in a calm but firm voice.

4 If you are with another person, pull the parents off of each other from behind.

From behind, clutch one of the sparring parents in a strong bear hug. Position your body with your chest pressing against his back. Reach your arms around him, over top of his arms, and grasp your hands together on his chest. Your partner should do the same with the other parent. Drag the opponents away from each other. Do not lift the parents off the ground: You will be susceptible to flailing legs and kicks to the shins, as well as to back strain.

5 Take fighters to separate areas.

Remove the parents to opposite sides of the field, or escort one of them to the parking lot, until you are assured that they have calmed down enough to finish watching the game in peace.

Be Aware

To break up a fight from a distance:

- Throw the contents of a large cooler on the fighting parents, or use squirt bottles to direct streams of water at their faces.
- Blow air horns near the fighters to frighten them.
- Throw slippery halftime snacks, like oranges, apples, or banana peels, under their feet to destabilize the fighting surface.
- Toss blankets or large towels over the heads of the fighters to disorient them.
- Pelt the fighters with soccer balls to distract them.

HOW TO TREAT A BLACK EYE

1 Make a cold compress.

Fill a clean sock with ice from the snack cooler. A cold can of soda or a juice box will also work.

2 Sit down.

Sit on a folding chair or on the ground.

3 Tilt your head back.

With your head tilted back, gravity will aid in reducing the swelling. Angle your head so that you can still watch the game with your good eye.

4 Cover the injured eye with the compress.

Use minimal pressure. If the compress is too cold, use a thicker cloth. Keep the compress over your eye for at least an hour or for the rest of the game.