

## ***Play the Way You're Facing***

Bob Adams

As the father of four children, I suppose it was inevitable that they would become involved in sports, and therefore I would be involved in coaching their teams. My initial adventure in coaching was with my oldest son in pee wee basketball, coaching a coed team of first-third graders. After three years of that, he migrated to soccer and I began a ten year soccer coaching career with all four kids: team high classic team – and everything in-between. From 5 year old “herd” ball to 16 year old girl’s recreation to



18 year old classic, I’ve pretty much seen it all. Not growing up with soccer, it was pretty much on-the-job training for me. I read the books, watched the CDs, went to training classes, and got the coaching certifications. Practices for my teams were all the same: learn the game, learn to play together, and have fun doing it. In spite of the practices, hard work, and game plans, when game day rolled around and the first whistle blew, it was like a blank canvas for a painter: **where do you go from here?**

Sometime along that coaching journey, I picked up a saying that became my favorite instruction as a coach, whether on the practice field or in a game situation:

### **Play the way you’re facing**

In soccer you must be prepared for instant action no matter what the situation. Your opponent may be driving down the field, heading toward your goal; you may be set to defend them one way but a sudden pass finds a whole new situation confronting you. You don’t have time to call a timeout, put in new players, and start a new play. The situation calls upon your instincts and training and awareness of your surroundings. You have to play the way you’re facing, and make the best out of it.

Isn’t it like that in ChurchWorld too? We have our long-range plans and strategic actions and bold initiatives and so on. More often than not, the world doesn’t work like that. New challenges can arise overnight. A crisis doesn’t wait on us; we have to meet it head-on. At that point, your leadership team can’t call a time out to let you regroup and develop a new action plan.

Church leadership is at its very best when the skills and characteristics instilled in the normal everyday learnings of a disciple are allowed to mature and be put into practice when the situation demands it. We don’t know what tomorrow is going to bring, but we know the Creator and Lord of the days. If we are obedient to Him, He will see us through any circumstance, all the way to the other side.

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