

Here are the top 10 ways to identify an out-of-control coach:

1. The coach yells too much at the referee. A coach should show his players how to deal with situations that don't go their way instead of complaining about those situations.
2. The coach threatens kids with hard practices for playing poorly. Extra push-ups and laps around the field won't help; working more on fundamental skills and team play will.
3. The coach's emphasis is on winning. Who cares if the kids didn't have fun, that everyone didn't get to play or that the coach acted like a 5-year-old? Winning is all that matters!
4. Kids don't get to play different positions. When your child only gets to play right field or never gets to dribble the ball or gets stuck every game on the offensive line, the win comes at the cost of fundamental skill development.
5. Unequal playing time. Kids all develop at a different age and pace, and all need playing time to develop skills and stay encouraged.
6. All team instruction and strategies relate to the score. The game plan changes to avoid letting weaker players swing the bat, catch the ball or do something with the ball once they get it. Borrrring, if you're that weaker player.
7. The coach is unhappy even if the team played well. Did the players have fun? Did their skills improve? Did they play to the best of their abilities? Did someone make his first basket, goal, touchdown or home run? Doesn't matter to this coach if the team lost.
8. The coach belittles players, calling a child a loser or making him feel like he lost the game for everyone else.
9. The coach is far too depressed after a loss. Why do you want to talk to the coach anyway? Give him his space. And why are so many youth coaches in need of psychotherapy?
10. Your child doesn't want to play anymore. Did you know that 70 percent of all kids drop out of sports by age 13? The saddest part is many of them could have had an enriching experience in sports if they had been encouraged in their strengths and given freedom to grow in their underdeveloped areas.

If your coach meets any of these 10 descriptions, it might be time to get involved. Winning at the expense of the child's welfare is a big price to pay.

Tom Kuyper writes for Gannett News Service. His column is published Wednesdays in the Times Union. He can be reached at tomkuyper@athletesintraining.com.