



Script for Honoring the Game

About Positive Coaching Scripts

PCA has developed Positive Coaching Scripts to help coaches introduce positive coaching principles to their teams.

Scripts shouldn't be memorized and recited word-for-word. Read through the script and then put the ideas into your own language, words you feel comfortable using when you talk to your team.

Positive Coaching Script for Honoring the Game

I love the game of soccer, and I hope you do too. Soccer has a long history and is the most played sport in the world. A lot of great things happen on the soccer field. I feel that it is an honor to be involved in the sport. That's why I want to talk to you about Honoring the Game.

Now, I am sure many of you have had parents or coaches talk to you about sportsmanship, or what it means to be a "good sport." What does it mean to you to be a good sport? (Answers may include "play fair" "don't cheat" etc.) Sportsmanship is important, but in order to get the most out of this soccer season, I want you to honor the game. We say the Honoring the Game goes to the ROOTS of the matter — **R-O-O-T-S**.

Each letter in ROOTS stands for an important part of soccer that we must respect. The R stands for Rules. The first O is for Opponents. The next O is for Officials. T is for Teammates, and the S is for Self.

R is for Rules The rules of soccer are what allow us to keep the game fair. Respect for the rules is important, even when it's possible to break them without getting caught. I want you to play by the rules, even if you think you won't get caught if you break them. Breaking the rules dishonors the game, even if it means that we win.

O is for Opponents Without opponents, we could have no game. A good opponent makes us do our best. Sometimes your opponents are friends of yours. I want you to respect your opponents, and remember they are out there to have fun just like us. I want you to try your hardest to win, not because you hate your opponent, but because you want to play your best. I promise that I will show respect for opposing coaches and teams, and I expect you to do the same.

O is for Officials It is very important to respect officials. Often, this can be the most difficult part of Honoring the Game, so we need to remember to keep it as a focus when we play. Officials have been selected and trained to enforce rules, and they have a very hard job. Without the officials the game would be unsafe and unfair. Officials are not perfect (just like coaches, athletes and parents!) and sometimes make mistakes. However, there is no excuse for treating officials with disrespect when they make errors. I want you to show respect for officials, even when you disagree with the call. I promise to do the same thing.

T is for Teammates A big part of soccer is the team. Being with your teammates should be fun. Later in life you will often be part of a team, and it is important to learn to work together. I hope you feel a commitment to each other as teammates and that you will agree to always play as hard as you can in practice and games. Please encourage and support each other on and off the playing field.

S is for Self Some people only Honor the Game when their opponents do, but I want us to Honor the Game no matter what the other team or its fans do. I want us to be the kind of team that Honors the Game even when others aren't because we set our own internal standards. And we live up to them no matter what. We have so much respect for ourselves that we would never do anything to dishonor the game.

So what do we mean when we say that Honoring the Game goes to the ROOTS of the matter?

Respect for: **Rules** **Opponents** **Officials** **Teammates** **Self**

If you do these five things, you are Honoring the Game. You and your teammates will get the most out of our season, and you will join the great tradition that is soccer. Now let's Honor the Game starting right now at this practice, especially when we scrimmage.

> Who can give me an example of how we Honor the Game of soccer?

> What does each letter stand for?

Honor the Game Talking Points



Jot down some talking points to use with your players at an early practice and then return to them throughout the season. For example,

- I want us to Honor the Game so we can be proud of ourselves win or lose
- The acronym ROOTS will help us remember what we need to do.
- **R** – We obey the Rules even if we can get away with bending them, and even if our opponents don't.
- **O** – A worthy opponent helps us get better – we want to play fierce and friendly and never think of them as enemies.
- **O** – We respect Officials even when bad calls go against us. I don't want you to speak to officials during a game even if you are being treated unfairly, okay?
- **T** – We don't do anything to embarrass our teammates, on or off the field.
- **S** for Self – Don't Honor the Game because I tell you to. Do it because you want to. We live up to our own standards even if our opponent doesn't.
- Later in the season ask, "Who remembers what the R stands for? The O?" etc.