



Honor the Game Day

Organizing Your Own Honor the Game Day

What It Is...

Today, so much of what we read and see in the media about youth sports focuses on violent and negative events. Honor the Game Day (HTGD) provides an opportunity for your organization to create a different type of news. HTGD focuses players, coaches, parents, officials, and fans on Honoring the Game. This PDF gives you all of the tools you need to make it happen. It takes a committed individual to make it a success, but the results are well worth the effort.

The Scotts Valley San Lorenzo Valley Soccer Club in Northern California was the first YSO to make Positive Play Day (the precursor to Honor the Game Day) a reality. Among other things, their event included:

1. Promotion of the day at all parent, coach and board member meetings
2. Creation of banners to hang at all of the fields promoting the themes of the day
3. Coaches reading a statement at the beginning of all games to players, parents, officials, and fans that stressed HTGD's goals

Coach #1: Our organization is very pleased to hold "Honor the Game Day" to support and promote the principles of Positive Coaching Alliance: Honoring the Game, Redefining "Winner," and Filling Emotional Tanks. Today we focus on "Honoring the Game" by respecting the rules of the game, our opponents, the officials, our teammates, and ourselves.

Coach #2: Our players have agreed to participate in "Honor the Game Day" by wearing patches on their uniforms that proclaim, "We Honor the Game Here." They will now run to the sideline to provide you with pins and cards with information about what YOU can do to "Honor the Game" and our children's youth sport experience.

1. Players wearing "We Honor the Game Here" stickers
2. Coaches, parents and fans wearing "We Honor the Game Here" buttons
3. Parents and fans receiving an "Honor the Game" card that outlines how they can help
4. Board members and other league leaders wearing PCA t-shirts present at all sites to help uphold a positive culture on HTGD

What You Need to Do To Make HTGD Successful

1. Find an advocate (or advocates) for HTGD who can persuade and inspire others (such as board members) to jump on the bandwagon with their support. This may be you!
2. HTGD is much more likely to be a success and a culture-shaping event for your YSO if you can get as many coaches, parents, and board members as possible exposed to PCA's themes before the event actually takes place. Learn more about PCA and Honoring the Game before your HTGD by doing one (or preferably more) of the following things:
 - Watch the video of Phil Jackson on Positive Coaching or use the PCA CD-ROM
3. Develop a HTGD statement or proclamation that will be read aloud before every game by the coaches to the players, officials, parents, and fans. You may also want to plan a procession to engage everyone in the spirit of the message. This might include having the players run out to their parents to hand them an Honoring the Game button and information card, as well as having players wear Honoring the Game stickers on their jerseys.
4. Create a press release to encourage media coverage and follow up with local reporters. Often media coverage focuses around the negative events that happen in youth sports. Let your HTGD be a positive example that others can follow.
5. Distribute HTGD information and materials to coaches at least one week in advance to ensure that they have time to practice the event with their teams. Send out a reminder notice and/or post reminders on the field (or in the gym), so that everyone remembers the format of this special day. Having extra Honoring the Game buttons, stickers, and information cards on hand at the games will also be helpful.
6. Strongly encourage board members and other league leaders to be present at the venues as active participants in upholding the positive environment that HTGD aims to make the standard.
7. Enjoy the day! And then call or email PCA and let us know how it went!