

Being a youth coach takes time and skill. You can play a big part in the lives of young people. You can watch them grow and develop, both personally and athletically, and know you played a major role.

Never underestimate your importance to the kids who play for you. At certain times in their lives, you may even be a bigger influence on them than their parents! Your athletes look up to you. What you say and think and do matters to them. As a youth coach, you can help shape your players' self-images, and can build their self-esteem.

Adapted from "Hey! Coach: Winning Ways With Young Athletes." ©1994 Prevent Child Abuse America

Motivating Your Athletes

As a coach, you have a major influence on your players' motivation. Though motivation should come from within, learning why kids participate can help you maintain and enhance your players' natural enthusiasm for sports.

There are various ways of enhancing your players' motivation. Know your players as individuals, and why they are playing. Teach them that success and winning are not the same. Make practices fun by involving all your players as much as possible, with lots of active time. Even if an athlete will never be a "star", he or she will feel pride in improving.

Information courtesy of



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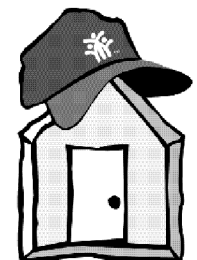
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coaching young athletes

Hey, Coach!

Winning Ways with Young Athletes

Teaming up to keep kids...



Safe at Home™

Mistakes - Stepping Stones to Achievement

Athletes will make mistakes - that's part of learning the game. As their coach, how you react is important.

When a mistake occurs...

... give encouragement immediately; even if they don't show it, most players are embarrassed and need the support.

... if it's needed, give corrective instruction - in an encouraging, instructive way. Be sure not to embarrass an athlete further by pulling them from the game. Experts recommend a three-part approach to giving corrective instruction:

1. Reward. Find something the athlete did right and compliment him or her to reinforce that behavior.
2. Be constructive. Don't emphasize the error, but the good things that will happen if they follow the instructions.
3. Encourage. ("Stay with it! You'll improve even more if you work at it.")

Coping with Misbehavior and Lack of Attention

How to prevent misbehavior is the question most coaches want answered. You know that maintaining good discipline is important for

a team, and that it's best to deal with it early in the season.

Here are some ways to provide that structure without having to yell, threaten, or act like a drill sergeant:

- Establish clear expectations right away.
- Hold a team meeting to decide reasonable team rules and consequences for breaking them.
- Try to balance structure with a bit of freedom. Remember your players are there to have fun.

What to do about team rule violations and refusal to cooperate...

- Give the player one warning.
- Give your athlete a chance to explain.

Disciplining Your Athletes

Maintaining discipline is a must in youth sports. Here are some tips on effective discipline in team sports.

Discipline techniques include:

- Setting limits on behavior.
- Making rules simple, few, and consistent.
- Being a role model for appropriate behavior.

With discipline, you help your athletes:

- Know what is expected.
- Control and change their own behavior.
- Become responsible for their own lessons.
- Learn a lesson that will positively affect future behavior.
- Increase feelings of self-worth and self-confidence.

Never:

- Yell
- Lecture
- Be sarcastic
- Use threat
- Use physical force

Creating a Positive Learning Atmosphere

Coaches are teachers, too. A positive learning atmosphere will help you develop your players' athletic skills.

- Recognize each player at least once during a practice or game.
- When giving instructions, be sure you have the players' attention first.
- When teaching a skill, first make sure the players can see you. Then: demonstrate the skill; tell them what to look for; give a brief explanation; and have your players practice the skill.
- Communicate with consistency.
- Avoid using sarcasm, it is often misunderstood.
- Be a good listener and be open.



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