

SUGGESTIONS TO COACHES/COACHES AS ROLE MODELS

1. Outline your practices in advance as much as possible. The more organized the coach is, the more interested the kids will be. Work on developing the skills of the players and look for improvement of all players. This is not an easy task as the players will be on different skill levels.

Every effort should be made to talk to each player at every practice and game. Give them encouragement every day. Don't let a player leave a game or practice feeling badly about his/her performance.

2. Correcting Mistakes

- a) Be realistic of the players and base your encouragement on reasonable expectations.
- b) Encourage effort rather than outcome.
- c) Reward the positives as soon as they occur, since immediate reward is more potent. But even delayed reward is better than none at all. NEVER take effort for granted.
- d) When giving corrective instruction, use the sandwich method:
 1. Start with a COMPLIMENT ("Way to hustle. You really ran a good pattern.")
 2. Follow this up with a FUTURE-ORIENTED INSTRUCTION ("If you follow the ball all the way into your hands, you'll catch those just like a pro does.")
 3. Then end with another POSITIVE STATEMENT ("Hang in there. You're going to get even better if you work hard at it.")

3. The Coach as a Role Model

All people learn by imitating others. This is particularly true for children who rely heavily on learning by observing others whom they regard as models. Thus, your players will learn as much from what you do as from what you say.

Recognize that your players look up to you because you occupy a leadership role in a very significant area of their lives. The way you deal with them and approach problem situations teaches them how to do likewise. Consequently, your players' behavior will be a reflection of your behavior.

For example, if you maintain your poise in the face of frustration, you are providing an excellent model for your players. If you treat officials and umpires with the respect and tolerance they deserve, your players are more likely to act in a dignified manner when calls go against them. Your players are sure to be affected by what you do. In fact, they will remember what you did long after they have forgotten what you said.

4. For some children, coaches may be a more important influence than their parents during a formative period of their lives. And in some cases, children may look to coaches as a substitute for a parent who is missing in either a physical or a psychological sense. Children can learn from both winning and losing. But for this to occur, winning must be put in a healthy perspective.
 - Winning isn't everything, nor is it the only thing.
 - Failure is not the same thing as losing; success is not synonymous with winning.It is important for coaches and parents to help young athletes deal with their failures. This requires prudence and sober realism. Failure is part of life. Youth should not be totally shielded from this reality. They should be taught resiliency and the ability to persevere and bounce back.

Players have complete control over the amount of effort they put forth, but they have only limited control of the outcome of a contest.

5. It is important to teach youngsters to compete against their own potential and not simply against other persons. It is possible for both coaches and parents to teach this important lesson. Players should be praised for good effort and progress even if this does not include victory or success.

Remember that no coach pleases everyone and no one can ask any more of you than your best effort.

The coach's challenge is to take teachable moments of victory or loss and give witness to Christian values by the manner in which he/she mentors to young people.