

GOOD COACHES KNOW HOW TO....

By Carl Normandin

Coaching can be a lonely profession. Your job as a coach includes tactician, motivator, organizer and disciplinarian, but perhaps the most important and sometime all encompassing job is that of problem-solver. Despite a coach's good intentions, sometimes "coaching situations" arise. Research has shown that if athletes have coaches who follow these hints, their athletes generally?

- Enjoy playing more.
- Like their teammates more.
- Rate their coaches as more knowledgeable.
- Feel their coaches are better teachers.
- Have a greater desire to play for their coaches in the future.

You may agree or disagree with these helpful hints; however, this is what the experts (the athletes) say about successful coaches.

1. How to be more positive:

- Give a lot of positive feedback.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Give positive feedback for desirable behavior as soon as it occurs.
- Praise effort as much as you do results.

2. How to react to mistakes:

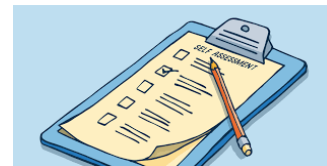
- Give encouragement immediately after a mistake.
- If the player knows how to correct the mistake, encouragement alone is sufficient.
- When appropriate, give corrective instruction after a mistake, but always do so in an encouraging and positive way; don't punish when things go wrong.
- Don't give corrective instruction in a hostile or punitive way.

3. How to maintain order and discipline:

- Maintain order by establishing clearly what is expected.
- Involve players in formulating behavioral guidelines and work to build team unity in achieving them.
- Strive to achieve a balance between allowing freedom and maintaining enough structure.
- Emphasize that during a game, all members of the team are part of the game.

4. How to deal with team rule violations:

- Allow the player to explain his/her actions (to coach and teammates).
- Be consistent and impartial.
- Don't express anger and a punitive attitude toward the athlete.
- Don't lecture or embarrass the player.
- Focus on the fact that a team policy has been broken, placing the responsibility on the player not you.
- Discuss why certain rules are necessary and how violation of these rules hurts the team.
- Focus on following through on the agreed-upon consequences of a violation. Don't use physical measures to punish (eg: running laps, doing pushups) as they become disliked and avoided. If a penalty is necessary, it is better to restrict involvement in something that is valued, such as having the athlete sit off to the side or not suiting up



5. How to get positive things to happen:

- Set a good example of desired behavior.
- Encourage effort, don't demand results all the time.
- In giving encouragement, be selective so that it is meaningful.
- Never give "encouragement" in a sarcastic or degrading manner.
- Encourage players to be supportive of each other and reward them when they do so.

6. How to create a good learning atmosphere:

- Set realistic goals.
- Always give instructions positively.
- When giving instructions, be clear and concise.
- Show players the correct technique (by demonstrations).
- Be patient and don't expect or demand more than maximum effort.
- Acknowledge and reward effort and progress.

7. How to affirm your athletes:

- Show all players that you care about them as individuals.
- Don't let players leave a practice or game feeling as if they are worthless or losers.
- Help players separate their personal value from their performance on a given night.

8. How to communicate effectively:

- Ask yourself what your actions have communicated.
- Encourage players to express their concerns to you.
- Be sensitive to individual needs.
- Communicate at the time when the player is most receptive.

9. How to gain respect:

- Establish your role as a competent and willing teacher.
- Be a fair and considerate leader.
- Set a good example.
- Don't demand respect ... earn it.

10. How to counteract parental pressures:

- Communicate to your athletes that the important thing is that they enjoy playing and develop their skills, not that they must win or be a "star."
- Communicate to parents that by placing excessive pressure on children, they can detract from the potential that sports can have for enjoyment and personal growth.
- Have a meeting with parents before the season to discuss these matters.



Coach _____

QUALITY	YES	NO
1. MORE POSITIVE ?		
2. REACT TO MISTAKES?		
3. MAINTAIN ORDER?		
4. DEAL W/ VIOLATIONS?		
5. MAKE + THINGS HAPPEN?		
6. LEARNING ATMOSPHERE?		
7. AFFIRMING?		
8. COMMUNICATE WELL?		
9. GAIN RESPECT?		
10. HANDLE PARENT ISSUES?		