

COACHING GUIDELINES

A youth coach is anyone coaching boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 18. A youth coach not only teaches the game but also has to take into consideration the mental and physical development of those he/she coaches. **In dealing with youth players, a coach must always develop his plans on the maturity, strength, fitness, and attention spans of his players.** It is always the coaches' appearance, their good communication skills with his/her players, and the coaches' ability to teach the skills by demonstration, that he/she will probably have a team that is happy to return to practice.

Here are some general guidelines to assist those who coach youth sports:

1. **Coach yourself** before you coach others. Practice your skills so that you can give competent demonstrations. This is the most convincing method of teaching skills.
2. **Do you homework.** Analyze previous practices and games. Prepare your practice schedules beforehand. Keep your team organized both on and off the field.
3. Practice individual skill development via the use of drills. **Setup drill stations** using the whole field and all coaches.
4. Practice **situational** scenarios. Review and explain both the wrong and right decisions.
5. **Have players practice their weaknesses** by teaching what is the correct technique. Always accentuate the positive, do not dwell on the negative.
6. Watch the training load – Too much or too little is equally bad. A **balanced training program** takes into account a player's age, physical and mental ability, and a player's need for improvement.
7. Be alert to individual needs and **be flexible** – Use one-on-one coaching.
8. Make sure **all your coaches are on the same page** and speak the same language when conducting practices or it will become confusing to the players.
9. Simplify
10. Do not over coach.
11. Make practice fun. Always be positive, patient, encouraging, and remain confident. Stress to your players, that the **KEYS TO SUCCESS** is repetition, self-confidence, and concentration.
12. Always remain aware of the **stage of physical and mental development of each player.** While they may all be the same calendar age, that does not mean they are the same.