

What Makes A Good Youth Coach

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Since this is a youth forum, we are talking about youth coaches. High School, College and beyond are a completely different type of coach.

Youth coaches play a important role in the development of atheletes and in the lives of the players they coach. Good youth coaches ensure that the individuals have a positive experience and are therefore more likely to continue in their sport and achieve their potential. Winning is important but secondary to learning at this level.

Sportsmanship and teaching it are a key factor in "What makes a good youth coach". My definition of sportsmanship is to teach kids to work together as a team in order to achieve a common goal. It also means teaching kids to respect other players as well as each other. Insults are not tolerated. Mistakes are going to happen and they should never be punished! Mistakes should be used as teaching tools for the next game.

Positive reinforcement is the best way to train youth players. The coach who yells, screams and punishes will not get the best out of young players. This may work with older players, but not with kids under 13. Using positive reinforcement, while explaining the proper way to do something makes the young player feel more like listening to the coach.

Bad Coach: (while players are on field) John!!! You threw to the wrong base!!! How many times have I gone over this?

Good Coach: (waits for players of the field) John, you did a great job of getting in front of the ball. Your throw was good, but was it the right place to go in that situation? What might have been a better choice?

Make the player think rather than recoil!

A Good Coach should:

- Understand and know the nuances of the game
- Provide a safe, fun and appropriate environment for all players to take part in
- Have up to date appropriate coaching qualifications, continually training to develop and maintain their level of competence
- Not lie about their past experiences to gain false confidences
- Have experience in coaching the relevant age group
- Always put the welfare of each player first - before winning or achieving goals
- Treat all players, irrespective of who they are, fairly and with respect and dignity
- Having a balanced relationship with players, based on trust and respect
- Give players the right amount of input

- **Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback, rather than negative criticism**
- **Recognize players needs**
- **Get to know their players and their parents**
- **Not throw the ball bucket around after a loss**
- **Promote fair play**
- **Be an excellent role model by demonstrating appropriate personal behavior at all times**
- **Not turn his back on his players when they don't perform up to his expectations**