

# 5 Tips to Better Coaching

What are some of the qualities you love in a good coach? After watching other coaches on the sidelines, seeing the culture of a team and seeing the body language of players, it became apparent that not all coaches are equal. I guess that is stating the obvious. It got me thinking, what are the simple qualities that make for a good coach. What makes a good coach when the goal is to improve player development and the overall person.



## Empowerment

One of the biggest things I tell parents often is that your youth sports athlete needs to advocate for themselves. Now this changes based on age, maybe when they are young like under 12 or 14 they can be more supported by parents. As they age up, a youth sports coach should support players that advocate for themselves. This will help them in the short term and definitely help in the long term.

What not to do – Put a player down or use the time to discourage growth.

## Knowledge

Be curious and knowledgeable about your sport. All sports change and grow. The more you are curious about how others do things, the more you can learn. This helps your athletes. Don't be afraid to learn new things about your sport. There is plenty of free content, drills, videos, etc. And speak to other coaches in your sport to learn how others do things.

What not to do – Stop learning or growing.

## **Ability to care**

A coaches ability to care comes in many forms. As a coach, your job is to make the players and team better. Get to know your players as individuals and as the team unit. Each one is unique so coach them that way. Care enough to expand their strengths and push them enough where they can grow. This will allow them to be confident on and off the field.

What not to do – Don't speak badly about other players on your team to their teammates. This breeds hate across the team and for you as a coach. It also begs the question: Do you need to feel some level of power by speaking ill of your youth athletes? Do you lead with fear or respect?

## **Energy**

Act like you want to coach. Be present in the moment. Make sure your players know you are engaged. Your players want to feel your energy when they are at practice or a tournament. Cheer them on, tell them what they are doing well and what they need to improve on.

What not to do – Don't be on your phone and unfocused. Don't sit on the bench coaching or the sideline but not speaking or actually coaching. The players and PARENTS notice.

## **Be specific with feedback**

When coaching, your players and teams want to get specific feedback. They want to know what they specifically did well and what they need to work on. When you give broad feedback like "good job" it doesn't tell them anything.

What not to do – Don't say "Go" and expect someone to know what you are talking about. Giving general terms doesn't help with player or team development.

Good luck coaching and we all applaud your efforts. The dedication you show to your players and families does not go unnoticed.