

Effective Coaching Behavior

“If a coach is constantly talking or yelling at players during the game, it prevents your players from thinking for themselves.” Steve Sampson, Former Men’s National Team Coach, June 1998

Congratulations on becoming a youth coach! To enjoy the best possible experience, you need to adopt a number of characteristics and behaviors. Few of us possess all the abilities required to properly coach young children.

The youth sport experience is all about children. Being an effective soccer coach requires certain traits. You must be a responsible adult at all times. You must possess a strong desire to work with children and to understand the complexities that exist within children of different ages, levels of development and maturity.

These are the positive characteristics that EWSC wants in their youth coaches...

- ✓ **High Moral and Ethical Standards.**
 - It’s the kids game, not coach or parents
 - Be an appropriate role model
- ✓ **Honesty.**
 - Be fair, no one likes it if you cheat.
- ✓ **Respect of Players, Parents and Community.**
 - Develop strategies to develop positive relationships with all involved.
- ✓ **Understanding Readiness Factor for Participation.**
 - Maturation-when to begin, how the game is structured.
 - Learning-what are children able to comprehend and how do they learn.
 - Motivation-internal desire to play and have fun.
- ✓ **Communication**
 - Appropriate verbal and nonverbal responses (body language & gestures).
 - Appropriate language (words, tone, volume, rhythm, articulation).
- ✓ **Development of an Appropriate Temperament for Coaching Children.**
 - Be sensitive to each child.
 - Exhibit a calm personality.
 - Show patience.
 - Observe and Guide; Don’t Direct
 - Use your normal voice, not a whistle
- ✓ **Ability to Motivate Positively.**
 - Develop high levels of self-confidence.
 - Positive coaching.

- Don't yell
- ✓ **Possess Leadership Qualities.**
 - Be prepared.
 - Be organized.
 - Demonstrate discipline-identify appropriate and inappropriate behavior and enforce team rules.
 - Learn to be critical of behavior, not a player's personality
- ✓ **Be Dedicated to Child Development and the Sport of Soccer.**
 - Understand what is appropriate for different ages and levels of play.
 - Let every child play (and play a lot).
- ✓ **Be Enthusiastic.**
 - Your enthusiasm is contagious.
 - Celebrate!
- ✓ **Have a Good Sense of Humor.**
 - Keep things light.
 - Have fun.
 - Smile and laugh.
- ✓ **Must Have a Current Knowledge of Coaching Youth Soccer.**
 - Learn about children and how they learn.
 - Learn the rules
 - Learn appropriate practices activities and content.
 - Learn appropriate tactics and strategy.
 - Learn how to have fun.

Summary

A coach's influence on a young child is extremely important. The effect that a coach has could last for an extended period of time beyond the season. Therefore, your personality, action and word could have a dramatic positive or negative effect on each and every child. The value of understanding children, being fair and enthusiastic, as well as being a positive role model, cannot be underestimated!

Why You Should be a Responsible Coach

Coaches are among the most influential adults in the lives of youth athletes. In conjunction with parents and teachers, coaches are key to developing character in our children. Soccer provides the chance to teach life lessons, if coaches become Responsible Coaches.

What is a Responsible Coach?

Let's begin by explaining what a Responsible Coach is *NOT*. A Responsible Coach is *NOT*:

- ✓ Soft
- ✓ A source of empty, unearned praise
- ✓ Satisfied with everyone just having fun

Responsible Coaching is more difficult, challenging and rewarding than taking a win-at all-cost approach. In addition to learning your "X's and O's" and competing fiercely for wins, you also commit to:

- ✓ Placing education and character development *before* wins
- ✓ Coaching beyond the "X's and O's"
- ✓ Coaching players to master soccer
- ✓ Filling "Emotional Tanks" to improve performance and instill love of sport
- ✓ Living and coaching by a code of honoring the game