

YouthFirst

Coaches Learning About Youth Sports
The Sports Education and Leadership Program at UNLV

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"We" Instead of "Me".

The essence of self-esteem is a sense of belonging. This desire is universal and applicable to both gender and individuals of all ages. Humans are social animals. We crave feelings of family connections and friendship to those whom we interact.

Through participation in youth sports, our young children are offered an instant opportunity to belong to a social setting. Team membership has unique qualities such as team jerseys, team practices, team parents, team photos, team outings and others. Belonging to a team creates an immediate association for each player.

Does the coach play any role in this feeling of belonging? The coach is the key figure in this team concept presupposition. Figuratively, he is the "glue" that holds the "sense of belonging" intact for each player.

More than being the expert in drills, skills and practices, the coach is the central role model. When he displays genuine interest and concern for all players, the affect is contagious. Coaches who recognize all his players for their contribution to the team teaches that the team belongs to the "headliners" as well as the "understudy".

Coaches who censors criticism among players preserves self-esteem of those under attack. Furthermore, encouraging parents to acknowledge and praise all the players on the team seals unity and togetherness within the organization. Coaches who recognize that their role is much more than being the teacher of skills are of benefit to all their players.

Participation in sports is an occasion in life where one experiences feelings of togetherness and connections with the members of this particular team community. Coaches who are aware of this fact and make efforts to provide this satisfaction to his players leaves an everlasting influence.



You Go Girl!

“Those who hold the title of coach should be aware that they are much more than the sport expert on the team.”

Does society realize the impact sports participation have on girls? Has the realization that through sport activities girls develop physically, emotionally and socially been headlined for all to see? History had demonstrated that realistically, females in sports have had little attention when compared to their male counterparts. As a coach, do you hold some responsibility in reinforcing the importance of female membership in team sports?

Coaches are a role model. Those who hold the title of coach should be aware that they are much more than the sport expert on the team. Their behavior is mirrored by their players and their attitudes adopted. When coaches preach the importance of female athletic participation in sports religiously, the results are contagious.

Additionally, as a sport leader, you have tremendous influences in young girls' lives. The emotional connection between coaches and their female players can be long lasting. Female athletes are especially sensitive to the approval or disapproval responses from their coaches. Your attention and positive feedback will maintain their desire to participate in sports. Moreover, when you display a sense of disregard to their unique emotional needs, girl players will lose motivation and interest in sports. Girls delight in the security of a positive relationship with their coaches.

Coaches who truly believe that females have a rightful place in sport participation will inspire others through their example lastingly. Years from now, as these young girls mature into adults, the influence you had as a coach will remain. Therefore, you hold partial ownership in their attitudes towards sport involvement. In so doing, the responsibility lies in ensuring a positive impact remains.

We can't be an example if we aren't aware of the needs of those in our stewardship.

Prepare Ye! Prepare Ye!



Seeing a player collapse during competition is every coach's worst fear. Meager amounts of coaches utilize the training and skills attained in collegiate first aid courses regularly. As a result, few are truly capable to handle a first aid situation at proficient levels. Despite other resources available such as team nurses or doctors, coaches have a responsibility to stay current in their first aid training. Additionally, coaches have a duty to be fully informed of all their players' health conditions including present disabilities, allergies and others.

Recently, heat exhaustion has been a concern due to national attention received from the sports media. Professional athletes of various sports have died as a result of heat exhaustion. These have been unnecessary tragedies in light of all the knowledge and technology available to eradicate its symptoms and consequences.

Coaches have a responsibility to teach common sense and awareness to all their players and trainers regarding heat exhaustion. Heat exhaustion also known as prostration is always a concern when one chooses to participate in physical activities in hot weather. Chances of heat exhaustion increases for athletes due to the high-intense nature of their activities. This condition occurs as a result of the physical body losing too much salt due to extreme sweating. When this materializes, the individual will experience fatigue, confusion, weakness, dizziness or faintness. Muscle cramps, a headache, an upset stomach or cold and clammy skin will most likely ensue as well.

Recovering from heat exhaustion is guaranteed when it's a mild attack. Resting in a cool place and replenishing with liquids most likely relieve symptoms. However, in extreme cases, immediate hospitalization is required.

Prevention includes educating athletes and trainers of the following:

Prevention includes educating athletes and trainers of the following:

1. Drink plenty of liquids before, during and after exercise.
2. Layer clothing. When the temperature increases, athletes can remove outer clothing and stay cool.
3. Do not exercise during the hottest part of the day. Stay out of direct sunlight.
4. Start workouts slowly and gradually increase.

Coaches have a personal investment in the health of their athletes during practices. Being literate in first aid management and prevention is of greatest insurance of all.

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How Low Can You Go?

*“How would
players from
opposing
teams rate
you as a
coach?”*



Does youth sports deserve its notorious reputation? Asking parents who have opted not to participate and they will fiercely agree. The most common reason for this omission from participation is due to negative experiences they have encountered with their children in youth sport leagues. Nothing evaporates quicker than good sportsmanship when sideline skirmishes occur between team parents or coaches. An enjoyable sporting event can result into a near riot when parents and coaches lack the maturity to control words and emotions. As a result, a staggering increase of youth and their families choosing to remove themselves from sport participation has transpired.

As a coach, how do you rate? Are you counted among those who hold blame for this phenomenon? When was the last time you seriously assessed your example and coaching style? Is your influence of a positive or negative nature? How would players from opposing teams rate you as a coach? Ponder the following.

1. Do you praise kids for simply participating?
2. Is anyone having fun when you are the coach?
3. Are players from opposing teams fearful of you?
4. Do you foster positive feelings among your team community and within your league?
5. Do you verbally criticize or assault other coaches or referees?
6. Are you taking the games too seriously?
7. Do you stay calm during competition, especially when your players make mistakes?
8. Do you allow everyone the opportunity to participate despite outcome?
9. Do you treat everyone involved with respect?
10. Are you a good role model of quality sportsmanship?

Changing the reputation of youth sports requires personal commitment and effort from all participating coaches. When the “fun” factor returns to sports, children and their families follow.