



Youth First

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

Volume 1, Series 1
Grades 1 & 2

Is it the Physical Ability or the Attitude???

In recent studies it seems as if physical ability in young athletes isn't always the important characteristic coaches are looking for. In fact most coaches prefer to work with a child who loves to play and does so with a good attitude rather than a very talented child with a bad attitude and constantly giving problems. In fact coaches who teach all athletes, especially young ones said in a recent survey, given by American Psychological Associations, that they care more about the psychological issues of the children before they care about the child's strength or even eye-hand coordination. In fact eye-hand coordination was only mentioned by approximately nine percent of the coaches surveyed. The top attribute coaches mention was "the love to play" mentioned by forty-three percent. I am sure most coaches wouldn't find this surprising though, after all almost everyone has had both kinds of children on their team. Its just how we deal with them both!!!

Keeping it FUN!!!!

Kids participate in sports for a variety of reasons, whether the parents made them or they wanted to, either way once they get there it is your job to make it fun so they want to stay. After all too many kids are dropping out of sports

- Stay away from routine practices
Use a variety of warm ups and exercises; the same thing everyday gets boring. For example to get them warmed instead of running all the time try a game
- Stay positive: DON'T yell
Kids need to know they are doing good and getting better. Use constructive criticism. Yelling and getting mad are going to frustrate them and make them eventually want to quit.

REMEMBER: The goal is to keep the kids in sports and out of trouble.

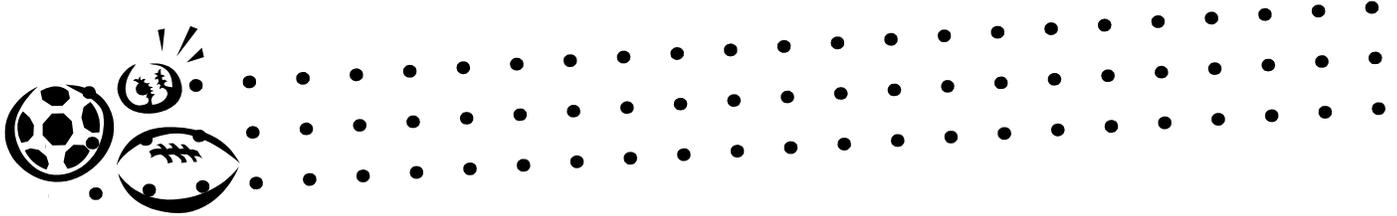
Some common yet good stretches

This is called the
Simply put the
and let the knees
Hold this stretch for
3-4 times!



butterfly stretch.
bottom of feet together
drop to the floor.
5-10 seconds and do it

Remember that warming up before doing these stretches is essential for preventing injuries so try having the kids run in place or do some jumping jacks to warm up there muscles.



Kids do sports

because:

They want to:

Have fun, improve their skills, learn new skills, make friends, spend time with their old friends, succeed in something, and become physically fit!!!

Why kids Drop Out:

- Lack of Success
- Not Playing
- Boredom
- Other interest
- Coaches yelling

Most of these dropouts begin at about age ten. So getting them when they are around ages seven to nine can definitely influence if they are going to stay in the sport or drop out. So being a coach of children younger than ten years of age is a big responsibility.

WHY ARE SPORTS SO IMPORTANT

Sports gives kids a place to grow, meet people, gain respect, and stay in shape. In fact it has been proven that kids in sports do better in school, are healthier, and have better social skills. These benefits of keeping kids in sports are even more necessary for the younger children because it teaches them about rules and how to accept them while they are young. As they get older they will use these lessons learned and develop into a respectful adult.

They are NOT Little Adults

It is very important for children to start some kind of sport while they are young to keep them fit, out of trouble, and even help develop their social skills. But one thing that is very important for all coaches and parents to realize is these young players are not little adults. In fact training them as if they were can cause serious injuries to their body. These unfortunate injuries are caused by constant and repetitive stress on immature bones and muscles. It is important for coaches to watch for prolonged signs of pain in their young athletes so these types of injuries can be treated promptly. After all, the longer you wait the more serious they can become. In fact conditioning exercises to increase their muscle strength is a good start to preventing, and even treating, injuries. Fortunately, however, major sport injuries are rare in younger children. But don't think it can't happen because it can, so train your younger athletes with different exercises than you do your older ones.

HOW TO PREVENT INJURIES IN YOUNG ONES...

Children under 14 years of age should focus on:

Balance

Light Agility

Eye-Hand Coordination

LIGHT resistance training (no weights)

And

FUN, FUN, FUN!!!