

Proactive Coaching LLC

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www.proactivecoaching.info

Be the Coach You Would Have Liked to Have Played For:

Be Professional

When you make the commitment to coach, be the best you can be. Develop a foundational philosophy on which you base all your decisions and choices. Know why you are coaching - for the love of the game and the love of the athletes. *Choose athletes above winning.* Build trust by being an expert with the use of your words in this public, emotional competitive arena. Constantly work to improve your knowledge and ability to teach the game and motivate players. Go watch and learn from the best people in this profession.

Be a Master Teacher

Teaching ability gives you credibility. Understand the game, the athletes and how to teach both. When working with beginning players, teach them to love the game first and then teach them how to play it. The best coaches at every level are organized and prepared. Instructions are simple, clear and cannot be misunderstood. Activity and attention high. They understand and use proper practice organization concepts and the rules of motor learning (how to teach physical skills). They can motivate using both praise and confrontation. *Your success with athletes will be in direct proportion to your ability to plan, organize, teach and motivate.*

Be an Example

Your players will hear what you say but they will learn more by what you do and who you are. Use your sport to intentionally teach lessons that can be used for the rest of life – perseverance, mental toughness, discipline, accountability, confidence, selflessness. Model the behaviors you want to see in your athletes – competitive poise, quiet confidence, etc. It is essential that you can do this in the most difficult times. Accept and abide by the judgment of the officials. Model and teach players to stay within the spirit of game. Honor the profession by purposely, intentionally and consistently teaching and modeling character.

Be a Confidence Builder

Believe in them before they are successful. Believe in them as people and competitors regardless of their level of ability. Allow them to experience and be accountable for both the successes and failures. See beyond today in their lives. *Communicate value.* Be the face your team needs to see to perform fearlessly.

Be a Team Builder

Even if you are coaching an individual sport, intentionally develop a team culture that includes behavioral expectations for all stakeholders (athletes, coaches and parents). The best team experiences teach being part of something bigger than yourself, accepting and embracing a role and not always getting your way – priceless lessons. *Create a climate that is safe for athletes* – physically safe but also, safe to take healthy risks, safe from ridicule, safe from unnecessary outside pressure, safe to learn and challenge themselves. Build your team using standards that athletes will rise to, not rules that they will test.

Be the Parent Who Is Part of Their Good Athletic Memories:

Release Your Child to the Whole Experience as Soon as Possible

We learned this from our athletes who have gone the furthest. One of the things they attributed to their success was that they had parents who “released” them to the team, the sport and the coach. As soon as you know that your child is physically and emotionally safe, one of the best gifts you can give them is to let the activity become theirs by taking small shifts of responsibility. *Releasing is trusting their athletic destiny to them instead of trying to control it.* All the successes and all the struggles that come with sport participation are theirs. Be there to support and encourage but by taking a step back, it allows athletes to take more responsibility and accountability for their experience. Developing healthy and positive relationships with other adults outside your family helps their growth and confidence. Be thankful for those adults outside our families who walk along side of our kids with us.

Model Behaviors We Expect Them to Exemplify

“Young people need models, not critics.” John Wooden.

Consistently demonstrate the behaviors you want your child to learn from this experience. Respect others. Win and lose with equal grace. Be a model of poise and confidence. *Be the face your athlete needs to see during competition.* When parents blame or complain about officials or coaches they are probably raising an excuse maker. Although it may help you to vent, remember it is never good for the athlete when parents are critical of coaches or officials. Whether you agree or disagree, learn to accept the judgment of the officials and coaches. Accept the results of each game. Do not make excuses. Also be an example by staying physically active throughout your life.

Be Aware of Your Words, Reactions and Body Language

Your child should never look at you for approval when they are competing but if they do, what will they see? The last thing any young athlete needs during a game is worrying about their parents being upset or stressed about their performance. Anything we do that would make them feel like their value to us is somehow tied to athletic performance or outcomes of games (good or bad) has long term negative effects on most kids. Winning or performing well does not mean we are better parents or that they are guaranteed a more successful life. *There is a fine line between involvement and interference and between encouragement and pressure.* The athlete can feel it.

Stop Hovering and Wanting Everything to Go Perfectly

There is only one guarantee in any sport season... it will not be perfect. Let go of perfection and trying to save them from every problem. Difficulties are either opportunities for them to persevere and grow or opportunities for us to “rescue them”. Let them be responsible for their own bag. If they forget their shoes or jersey, it will probably never happen again. Athletics provides a place where we can “cut the cord”. Don’t try to smooth out all the bumps in the road. Let them grow by giving them a chance to figure things out. By solving everything for them the message to them is that you don’t think they can handle difficult situations. Give them the tools and then let them become a problem solver. There is not a better place than athletics to learn to take healthy risks and to fail. Let them take the natural risks involved in sport without worrying. Teach them that failure is part of

the experience and it doesn't mean they are a failure. Encourage healthy risk taking and then let them live with the results. Over scheduling and over managing can create more stress and anxiety, hurt performance and take the fun out of the game. Also avoid the natural tendency to critique the game. Demonstrate respect by giving the athlete time and space after competition. *The less you give advice, the more likely they are to ask for it.*

Four Roles – Choose One

In every athletic competition there are only four roles – players, coaches, spectators and officials. Before you get to the game, it is better for the athlete if everyone just chooses one of those roles. Trying to get the team to perform well is the responsibility of the coaches and the players. It is the job of the official to make the judgment calls. The parent can contribute by being encourager and confidence builder. It is not your responsibility to try to win or influence the outcome of the game from the bleachers.

Proactive Coaching presentations, published materials and workshops provide application models to develop character-based individuals, teams and programs.

One athlete of character improves your team - One team of character changes your school - One school of character impacts your community - It all begins with a coach of significance.

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