

7 Keys to Great Youth Sports Coaching

Culture is key

Building a strong team culture is essential for success because it sets the tone for your players and parents. A positive culture fosters trust, consistency and clarity, while a negative one can breed the opposite.

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Prepare

"By failing to prepare, you're preparing to fail." There are increasingly more resources available now, including the [TeamSnap+ Coaches Pack](#). This provides access to a library of drills and week-by-week curriculums for soccer, baseball, and softball. [TeamSnap has partnered](#) with the likes of MLS and Major League Baseball, and more sports and partnerships are coming.

Communicate

Once you've done some advance work on culture and practices, it's essential to communicate with the players and parents. Don't overcomplicate this: Gather the parents before the first practice and tell them who you are, why you coach, and some of your values and goals for the season.

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Ask for help

More specific to your team, though, it's important to engage the parents and ask for help, especially for someone to serve as a team manager. That person can serve as a secondary or primary contact for parents, answering the common and repetitive questions that they may have missed from previous emails or announcements.

Model grace

As noted earlier, it's so important for us to lead by example, and we want the players and parents to know that there isn't an expectation of perfection. That's simply impossible, and making that the standard will engender frustration and disappointment.

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Encourage parental involvement

Keeping your parents and families engaged is crucial to cultivating a positive environment with your team. Encourage them to participate both on and off the field. Whether that's volunteer work on game days or continued skill development at home, keeping the parents in line with your mission and goals is important.

Promote positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement or simply encouragement is an ideal environment to help our youth athletes thrive. Keep their attitudes upbeat and help guide them through difficult situations on the field.

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