

15 Reminders For Youth Coaches

1. Today's Player:

- Coaches are up against more today than in years past: X-Box 360, PS3, WII

2. What Young Men Need:

- Need/want to belong to something: pride
- Need/want more role models: kids emulate what they see and hear
- Need/want discipline: most want to do what is right and most know right from wrong

3. Coach's Role:

- Make them accountable: in practice and games, you set the tone by your expectations
- Inform...Instruct...Inspire
- KISS: Keep It Simple (Stupid): have few rules, but adhere to them.
- Show them...don't tell them: most coaches talk too much
- "My job is to eliminate my job"

4. Player's Role:

- Most know what to do, many know how to do it, few are willing to do it.
- Self-motivation: Kids must want it more than their parents
- Respect of coach, team, umpires, and opponents
- Become accountable...accept responsibility
- Do something: laziness is a disease

5. Respect For the Game:

- Teach them to do things right: behavior at ball park, handling victory and defeat
- Baseball is a game of details: develop a passion for the stuff that may seem boring

6. Respect For the Team:

- Representing on and off of the field: make it a big deal to play for Riverside
- Immerse yourself in your teammates: they have to know one another
- Selflessness: Being happy for another's success even if that means you don't play as much or at all
- The coach is responsible to breathe life into these elements: If not you, who else will?

7. Practice/Preparation:

- Develop a style: decide what type of team you want to be and work towards that
- Preparation breeds confidence, which leads to a successful performance
- Practice should be hard enough on your players that the game seems easy.
- Let them know the importance of hustle and enthusiasm: run on and off the field
- Practice is for the coach, games are for the players: don't teach during a game
- Don't yell at them for messing up a situation in a game that you haven't gone over in practice.
- Have a practice plan written on paper: Don't wing it.

8. Batting Practice:

- Don't just give the kids 8 swings w/ a defense: No 1 ½ hour practice of one player hitting and the rest of the team standing in the field.
- Use stations : Tees...whiffles...bunting
- Use "Rounds" with live defense: Incorporates hitting, fielding and base running: You control the situations: number of outs, score, base runners: Stop practice to fix mistakes
- Remember that Pre-game is a practice: use the same philosophies

9. Fielding Practice:

- Try to give each player some reps at both the infield and outfield positions each practice.
- IF's work on routine plays: force outs and tags
- OF's work on cut-offs, throwing to bags, fly balls, ground balls, angles
- Catchers: work on receiving...throwing...passed balls...plays at plate: keep mask on
- Pitchers: work on bunts...covering 1st on balls to right side...comebackers...backing plays up
- Preach that ALL positions are important: OF's tend to think they are less important in youth league. Change that way of thinking by stressing the importance of outfield play.

10. Baserunning:

- Should be practiced in batting practice
- Home to 1st
- 1B: reads on dirt balls, ground balls, fly balls (IF and OF), line drives, picking up 3B coach
- 2B: When to run and not to run on both ground balls and fly balls
- 3B: When to run, tag
- Don't expect them to know what to do in a game if you didn't cover it at practice.

11. The Game:

- Umpire yells "Play Ball" not "Work Ball": Have fun, be prepared. It's not the World Series
- Jot down notes during the game that you want to address at next practice.
- Be a positive influence during the games. Don't make them afraid to make a mistake.

12. Know the Rules: (Coaches and players)

- Teach the kids the rules: start practices or game each day w/ a new rule: Infield fly (most coaches don't know it)

13. Umpires:

- Show respect to umpires and DEMAND your players do as well.
- Do you have to have every call? Deal with it.
- Your reactions will be seen by your players.
- Would you want someone yelling at you or your son?

14. Dugout:

- Teach your players to know where their gear is.
- Teach to the bench players during the inning whenever possible: keep them involved
- Praise them first, correct them second.
- 9 Second OF rule: They have 9 seconds to get on and off field.
- 5 Second IF rule: They have 5 seconds to get on and off field.
- Must know where they are playing prior to the 3rd out.

15. Personnel: Where should I put 'em?

- Catcher: Must be a leader...must be vocal...must WANT to be a catcher
- First base: Excellent glove, good size (target), arm strength not as important.
- Second base: second best fielder, great range, agile, good footwork, headsy
- Third base: fearless, athletic, good lateral movement, accurate arm important
- Shortstop: best all-around ability, team leader, makes routine play consistently
- Left field: good speed, arm strength not as important
- Center field: excellent speed, covers most area, arm strength important
- Right field: good speed, athletic, probably your best arm

The bulk of this information comes from the head coach at Vanderbilt University. He decided to speak on these 15 reminders at a coach's clinic after years of watching the practices and games of his 10 year-old son. Some of the information is a compilation from the other speakers at the clinic.