

Commerce City Parks & Recreation Department

# COACHES MANUAL

**Learn Sportsmanship  
Develop Teamwork  
Build Friendships**



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***Change a life - Build a Legacy***

## Commerce City Parks & Recreation Department Goals and Purpose for Youth Sports

- To give every child the opportunity to participate in Youth Sports, regardless of ability.
- To teach the participants the skills and fundamentals of the sport in which they are participating.
- To encourage the participants' development of sportsmanship, team play, and leadership.
- To teach the participants that competition and winning are not the primary objectives; therefore a strong commitment should be made towards improvement of skills and just having fun!!
- To encourage coaches to teach children that success does not require winning a game and that losing does not mean one is a failure.
- To have coaches teach kids to strive for excellence, to do the best they can.
- To train coaches through the National Youth Sports Coaches Association Certification Clinics.
- To have mandatory playing rule to guarantee participation opportunities for every child.
- To stress to participants the importance of being drug free and the relationship of sports participation.

# Coaching Procedures

*Great coaches are successful both “on” and “off” of the field or court*

## **Before the first practice:**

- Call every family on your roster and introduce yourself.
- Tell them about practice times, days and locations.
- Discuss any events or clinics prior to the first practice.
- Set-up a short meeting prior to or immediately after the first practice (Should take no more than 30 minutes).
- If you are unable to contact any players, contact the sports coordinator immediately.

## **Parent Meeting: (MAKE SURE THIS HAPPENS AT THE FIRST PRACTICE)**

- Talk about your background, your connection to the community, history with sports and coaching experience.
- Have parents introduce themselves and child, a little something about them or their history with sports.
- At the meeting pass out Player Emergency form, Parents Code of Ethics (make sure everyone signs, and any other information you may have.
- Let your parents know your expectations of them and find out what they expect from you. If the expectations are unrealistic, now is the time to address them.
- Discuss proper sideline behavior, keeping all comments positive, and refraining from shouting instruction that may interfere with your coaching and the players’ ability to concentrate on the game- RESPECT THE GAME.
- Get a list of parent’s names and cell phone numbers and email addresses if communicating by email. And tell parents how you will be communicating and the best way to reach you.
- Indicate how important practice time is, we have a short time together, make sure it counts. It can be negative for a child and the team when a player arrives at a game without the necessary information and preparation to be a successful member of the team.
- If you still need an assistant or a backup, now is the time to find them.
- As a positive coach we want to improve the individual and teams skills, improve fitness, and teach life lessons that extend well beyond the playing field.
- Emphasize: Sportsmanship. Teamwork, Development, & most importantly- HAVING FUN!

## **First Practice:**

- **Your 1<sup>st</sup> practice will dictate your entire season... Be prepared!**
- LEARN EVERYONE’S NAME...FAST.
- Only the kids on your roster may participate in practice.
- The number one reason kids drop out of programs is because they do not feel connected to the team. It is your job to create team unity and encourage new friendships from the start. Make sure kids who know each other are separated and mixed with kids they do not know.
- They will be excited at the beginning of practice. It is okay to start warming up and do some light running before you talk with them.
- Be organized. Have your practice planned out in detail. Go over practice plan with your assistants before the practice.

- Make sure every child is on your roster. If not, then they are not on your team. Please contact the League Director as soon as possible if there are problems. Friends and neighbors may not participate in practices or games. Only the League Director may add a player to your roster.
- Don't forget to spend time warming up and stretching.
- Remember your objectives. Participating in sports helps to increase the self-esteem of the athletes and develop character in youth.
- Give 100% effort, 100% of the time. Have a purpose for everything you do at practice, at games, and in life.
- Discuss goals and objectives for the season- winning is not a goal, it is a result of accomplishing goals within a teams control (for example: quality of opponents, officiating, and weather), focus on what you can control: free throws, rebounds, turnovers, and take-aways.
- Remember injuries often happen when kids are horsing around
- Respect the facilities and staff or we will lose them. 6-7 you are in the gym at 6 out at 7.

## **GAME DAY**

### **Before the Game**

- Be the first person to arrive at the field.
- The performance of most athletes will increase if competition pressures can be reduced. A brief pregame talk gives you the opportunity to put the importance of the game in its proper perspective.
  - Remind players of the skills they have been practicing and tell them to concentrate on performing these skills rather than worrying about what their opponents will do.
  - Focus only on what they can control and not worry about those outside their control.
  - Emphasize the need to think and play as a team and not to criticize other teammates.
  - Above all, stress the importance of behaving properly at all times, showing good sportsmanship and respect, not arguing with officials or opponents, and most importantly, having fun.

### **During the Game:**

- Relax and enjoy, remember we are having fun. To be a good coach you do not always have to give advice. It is okay to spend some time smiling and being supportive.
- Try to be enthusiastic and compliment players on good performances. Remember, everyone on your team deserves encouragement, not only the best players.
- When players come out of the game, first try to say something positive about their performance, then give them ideas and suggestions for improvement, followed by another compliment (compliment sandwich).
- Do not focus on what they a player is doing wrong, focus on what you would like then to do right.
- Reward effort- not success.

### **After the Game:**

- Always shake hands and congratulate the other team and thank them for their participation.
- Have kids thank the officials and shake their hands after every game.
- Talk to your team about the positive things that happened during the game, regardless of the result of the game. Positive re-enforcement is the best means to accomplish goals and build confidence in children.

- Now is not the time to discuss problems with opposing coaches or officials. They do not work for you. Their supervisor is the League Director to which all problems should be directed.

## Safety and Abuse Prevention

The safety of the participants in our programs is our number one concern. You are working with someone's child; always remember how you would want someone to treat a child of your own. Your responsibility is much more than simply winning and losing, it is about teaching life lessons, respect, and keeping them safe.

- Never be one on one with a child unless it is your own
- Do not give gifts to players
- Please do not hug players (high-five, knuckles, or tap on the head are the best ways to show affection and appreciation)
- Do not hang out with players outside of a practice or game setting
- Do not drive players to and from games or practice

Many injuries can be prevented if we take a few simple precautions.

- Regularly inspect the playing area and equipment for hazards (ie. holes, glass, stones, metal, debris, water, ice, etc.)
- Report dangerous conditions immediately and do not permit athletes to play until the area is safe.
- Be aware of weather conditions (See Lightning Policy for additional information).
- Do not allow children to participate in physical activities when hurt.
- Be sure to warm up and stretch muscles before participating in physical activities.
- Prevent heat injuries by encouraging regular water breaks and including brief rest periods.
- Be alert for stray balls and players coming your direction.
- Advise players about the proper playing equipment. Teach players how to prevent blisters by wearing footwear that fits correctly, by gradually breaking in new shoes, and by wearing two pairs of socks if needed
- Check to ensure all equipment is in good working order (ie. no cracked bats, mounds/bases are secure, no goals or fences with sharp corners protruding, no mats/pads with insufficient padding)

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The first practice initiates the season, it is the most important and will set an example for the entire season. Focus on mastering a skill, not winning the game. When we focus on the scoreboard, anxiety increases when they focus on something out of their control. This can weaken self-confidence and take the joy out of sports. When the team is spending emotional energy worrying about losing they are not focused on the play at hand and little mastery or success is achieved.

75% of kids will drop out of sports before middle-school, you can help to change this disturbing statistic. Make it a rewarding and positive experience for every kid on your team.

Usually four to six practices are scheduled prior to the first game in addition to preseason clinics. These practice sessions should be used to provide the basic rules, skills and procedures needed for the first game (sport specific sample practice plans are attached). During these practices, the players should learn:

- Positions – Each position and it’s role should be explained. Stress the need for each position and how players need to work together.
- Strategy – Teach basic defense and offense by using controlled scrimmages.
- Basic Skills – Use drills to teach the basic skills and rules needed to fully participate and perform in the sport.

### **The Big 4 for success**

- To give maximum effort all the time
- Learn- be open to suggestions – focus on weaknesses not strengths
- Mistakes are OK (take chances, stretch your limits, and grow)
- Respect- the game, the coaches, the other players, the officials

Be sure to have all equipment you need for each practice and game.

### **Practice Session Outline (1 hour practice session)**

#### **I. Warm Up (5 minutes)**

Warm up activities prepare the body for more intense activity, thus reducing the risk of injury. Each practice must begin with some simple warm up exercise.

#### **II. Stretch (5 minutes)**

Stretching is vital before participating in any physical activity. Stretching the muscles related to the activity is very important. For example, if a child is pitching, he/she should concentrate on stretching his/her arm and back muscles. If a child is catching, the focus should be on the legs and back.

#### **III. Skill Development (20 to 30 minutes)**

The skill development component should be age appropriate and organized so that everyone is involved. Use individual and partner drills frequently. Arrange players so that everyone has room to practice at the same time. This allows players to make mistakes without fear of being ridiculed in front of teammates and ensures plenty of activity. The skill development consists of two parts:

- A. Practice previously taught skills (all players benefit from working on fundamentals)
  1. During this part of the practice, players should work on improving skills they already know.
  2. Ask for player input on what skills they need to work on based on previous practice sessions or games.

- B. Teach new skills(at least one new skill per practice should be taught, using the existing skills for a foundation).
  - 1. Give players something new to try at each practice
    - a. Briefly explain the skill
    - b. Demonstrate the skill (coach or player)
    - c. Let players try the skill
  - 2. Keep instructions to a minimum as players are practicing skills
    - a. Give encouragement.
    - b. Try to correct errors in a positive way.

**IV. Play (20 to 30 minutes)**

Scrimmages are fun and they increase the likelihood that skills learned in practice will be used in games. Include activities that simulate the contest conditions players will face and that will develop useful team skills.

- A. Rotate players so they all get to play all positions.
- B. Scrimmage using simplifications of the game
  - 1. Play for specific periods of time, not score.
  - 2. Focus on one or two rules or skills at a time.
  - 3. Control the scrimmage by periodically stopping play and pointing out learning opportunities.

**V. Team Circle (5 minutes)**

Team circle allows for the coach to go over the skills that were learned at the at practice. It also allows the coach to get feedback from the players. Also during this time the coach should remind the players of the next practice or game.

## SKILLS AND DRILLS

Young players respond best to challenges. Try to build on the foundation of skills and give your players something new to practice in each session. When you present a skill, give a brief explanation, demonstrate the skill (use a player if they can perform the skill), then let players try the skill. Remember that players learn more from doing rather than listening, so keep instructions to a minimum. As the players are practicing, give encouragement and try to correct errors. Remember to be positive in your comments, so players are not discouraged. Some helpful rules for teaching new skill

- 1. Understand thoroughly what you want done and make your directions brief. Demonstrate the skill using proper terminology in your explanations.
- 2. Stand where you can face everyone. Speak so that you can be heard, but do not shout. Let the group listen.
- 3. Get into the practice skill activity without hesitating. Choose something that is familiar or that is easy to explain in a few words, and get the group actively interested from the very start. More difficult material may be presented after the players have gained confidence in themselves.
- 4. Practice a skill until it is almost at its best, then move on to another. Progressive learning and exposure to several skills will help eliminate boredom.

5. Actively participate.
6. Use positive reinforcement. Your players need smiles, eyes contact, encouragement and communication when they do well.
7. Keep practices fun through a games approach to drills.

PLEASE VISIT [TEAMSIDELINE.COM/COMMERCECITY](http://TEAMSIDELINE.COM/COMMERCECITY) FOR ADDITIONAL DRILLS, COACHING TECHNIQUES & INFORMATION

## INJURY AND RISK PREVENTION GUIDELINES

### THE DO'S

Coaches have responsibility to help prevent injuries. Many injuries can be prevented if coaches take few simple precautions.

1. Regularly inspect your playing area and equipment for hazards. Report dangerous conditions immediately and do not permit your athletes to play until it is safe.
2. Make sure that players do not participate in physical activities when hurt.
3. Make sure that players warm up before all practices and games.
4. Supervise all activities and teach strict observance of game rules. "Horsing around" is a common cause of injuries.
5. Prevent heat injuries by encouraging regular water breaks and including brief rest periods.
6. Advise players about the proper playing equipment. Teach players how to prevent blisters by wearing footwear that fits correctly, by gradually breaking in new shoes, and by wearing two pairs of socks if needed.
7. Never be the only adult on site. An accident requires a lot of attention. Always have your first aid kit at practice and games.

### THE DONT'S

1. Don't administer medications. This includes aspirin and sunscreen.
2. Don't transport the injured child yourself. If you feel the youth needs medical attention notify the parents or call 911.
3. Don't give a diagnosis of injury unless you are a physician. Just state the symptoms and what happened.
4. Don't leave any youth unattended without adult supervision.

### Prevention

**General Injury Prevention** Know the risk factors of the sport specific physical activity. Help athletes to develop strength flexibility and endurance. Increase training time, distance and repetitions, no more than 10% a week. Encourage athletes to report pain and injury. Respond positively about complaints of pain.

**Preventing Muscle Strains** Warm up activities are slow sustained exercises, calisthenics and slowly increasing the intensity of motion. Ingredients of a good warm up:



Increased body temperature  
 Increased respiration  
 Increased heart rate  
 Followed by stretching muscles with a slow static stretch

**Cool Down** Gradually reduce workout intensity. Having athletes walk at a slow rate until their heart rate gets near normal. Follow up with light stretching.

**Over Use Injuries** Tendonitis, bursitis, and stress fractures. Usually caused by repetitive stress and damage to tissue. Usually athletes continue to play when fatigued or injured. Athletes often fail to report injuries. It is very important that coaches are proactive and ask pointed questions if they suspect an athlete is injured or overly fatigued. Youth are predisposed to over use injuries because of the physiology of growing. Cartilage of young athletes is easily damaged. Muscles and tendons of young athletes tend to tighten. Some youth specialize in a select sport too early, cross training is important.

**Dehydration Prevention** Two to three hours before a workout or competition drink 2 cups of fluid. One hour before a workout drink 1 cup of fluid. Fifteen minutes before, ½ cup of fluid. Fluid should be caffeine free. Athletes should have water breaks every 10-20 minutes.

**Preventing Sprained Ankles and Knees** Stretching of muscle groups surrounding the joints is very helpful in reducing sprains. Many sprains happen when the entire foot is planted and the leg twists.

**Preventing Slide Burns** If possible an athlete should wear long pants or protective pads on, when sliding.

**Preventing Tendonitis** Most commonly caused by repetitive movements on body parts that lack conditioning and stamina. It is an inflammatory response to repeated stress or irritation.

## FIRST AID BASICS

### Emergency Basics

- Developing first aid common sense is an important part of providing first aid care.
- First aid, properly given, can reduce the effects of injuries.
- First aid must be given quickly and effectively.
- First aid must be administered calmly and efficiently. In the excitement of an emergency, it is important to stop for a moment to clear your head and think before you act.
- If you remain calm it will set the tone for the victim and bystanders to remain calm.

Injury	Recommended First Aid
Bleeding	<p><b>General Principles to Control Moderate to Heavy Bleeding</b></p> <p><b>Direct Pressure-</b> Compress directly over the Wound.</p> <p><b>Elevation-</b> Elevate injury above the heart, if fracture is indicated.</p> <p><b>Pressure Points-</b> Four Points: between elbow and shoulder on t</p>

	brachial artery, femoral artery in upper middle inner thigh.
Abrasion: Outer layer of skin is scrapped away from fall.	To decrease the possibility of infection, clean the injured area thoroughly and cover with a sterile bandage.
Incision: Sharp, even cuts from knives, razor blades broken glass. This result in heavy bleeding and damage to muscles, nerves, and tendons.	Use direct pressure with a sterile bandage over incision area to stop bleeding. If the wound bleeds through the bandages remove all but the bandage immediately covering the wound and replace with fresh bandages as needed.
Laceration: Jagged or torn cuts from sharp Irregular edges or by force. This type of wound results in heavy bleeding and damage to muscles, nerves, and tendons.	Treat with direct pressure over injured area. Continue to treat with direct pressure until bleeding stops, then apply a dressing.
Punctures: Holes in soft tissue from sharp, pointed objects such as pins, nails or splinters. There is a possibility of internal bleeding and infection from tetanus in these sorts of wounds.	If object is larger than a pin leave object in tissue and seek medical assistance.
Avulsions: Part of the tissue is torn away from the body. Avulsions usually result in heavy bleeding which needs to be controlled.	If body part has been completely separated from the victim, pack tissue in ice and get them to a hospital immediately.
Heat Stroke: Signs and symptoms: Red, hot dry skin, dilated pupils, very high body temperature. Body needs to be cooled quickly.	The victim must be cooled down as quickly as possible. Escort them to a cooler place and if necessary immerse victim in a cool bath or wrap them in wet sheets. Do not give them anything to eat or drink. The victim also needs to be treated for shock.
Dehydration: Profuse sweating usually accompanied a strong thirst.	Rehydrate by drinking large amounts at one time of cool, not cold, fluids such as water.
Heat Exhaustion: This condition usually occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a warm, humid place. In these cases body fluids are lost through heavy sweating but the sweat does not evaporate so the body is not effectively cooled. Signs and symptoms: Cool, clammy skin, pale, white skin, heavy sweating; dilated pupils; headache, nausea; dizziness; vomiting.	The victim must be cooled down as quickly as possible. Escort victim to cooler place. Remove or loosen their clothing and have person lie down on their back and put their feet up. Responder can fan victim or apply cold packs, wet towels to speed up cooling process. Remember to be aware of signs of shock in the victim. Have victim drink ½ glass of water every 15 minutes.
Heat Cramps: The loss of water and salt from heavy sweating causes muscular pains and spasms during heat exertion. Signs and symptoms: Hard “knotting” in a muscle; involuntary muscle contraction and loss of function.	Escort victim to a cooler place and give them ½ glass of water every 15 minutes for one hour.
Insect Bites and Stings: Signs and symptoms: Pain; swelling of the throat; redness or discoloration at the site; itching; hives; decreased consciousness; difficulty of noisy breathing.	Make sure other children are safe and remove from any further danger. Check the child for any life-threatening condition. Call for help if the child shows signs of an allergic reaction. For a typical insect sting, remove the stinger (use a swift swipe of a fingernail or credit card), and wash the area

	with soap and water. Apply a cold compress to reduce swelling and pain. Place the injured area below the level of the heart. Be alert for signs of shock.
Nose Bleed: Symptoms: Bleeding, usually out of only one nostril, no blackening Under the eyes, the septum (bridge of the nose) is in place.	Hold their head in a natural (upright) position. Apply ice to the bridge of the nose. If bleeding does not stop within 10 minutes seek medical attention. Do not let victim blow their nose.
Nose Fracture: Symptoms: Blackening under the eyes, septum is displaced, usually victim complains of headache and or nausea.	Ice on the bridge of the nose. Seek medical attention. Do not have the victim blow their nose.
	Note: when an athlete has received a blow to the head do not administer any aspirin, Tylenol, or any other type of headache relief medicine until being directed to do so by a physician. These medications can mask symptoms and lead to a misdiagnosis.
Fracture: Deformity, swelling, direct tenderness, indirect tenderness, bony deviations, dislocation. Always do a Bilateral comparison.	Seek medical assistance immediately, if victim must be moved, immobilize the injured area.
Strain: Pain over the site of injury, muscle spasm, loss of strength.	It is difficult to tell the difference between mild and moderate injuries. Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation (RICE). If it is too painful for normal walking the athlete should be referred immediately to seek medical attention.

## Some useful tips from the Best...

### What To Teach

The challenges of coaching change dramatically depending on the age of your team, but the information here should be appropriate to all but the oldest and most competitive teams. Coaching requires more than just skills and drills. It requires sensitivity, discipline, respect, communication and above all a good sense of humor. Here are some basic goals to strive for when coaching your team.

- For teams less than 12 years old, focus on teaching the basic skills. Introduce 'finesse' skills slowly and one at a time, all the while ensuring that the basic skill is still being performed correctly.
- Encourage and praise the performance of the team and the individual players, not so much on winning and losing. Many younger teams won't even know what the score was, so why remind them? A "Team Talk" after every practice and game is a great way to communicate with the team AND individual players.
- Respect every child, and they will develop respect for you.
- Challenge yourself to have every kid experience some level of success at every practice and game. Let them know that you are proud of them for their effort, accomplishment, concentration, discipline etc...
- Try to use skill development exercises and drills that foster teamwork and cooperation, not competition amongst the players. You'll have enough trouble with this without encouraging it further.
- Talk to the parents. They can do wonders to UNDO everything you try to teach if you don't communicate your expectations of the team and their child with them. Take a look at our sample [Parent Letters](#) for some ideas.
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There are six fundamental areas that you as a volunteer coach should focus 'teaching' your team players.

**Fun!** Since when was a baseball, soccer, football... game supposed to be fun? If your players aren't making 2 million a year, then why do they play? For 4 to 8 year olds, they play completely for fun. For players' 10 to 12 years olds, they play for competitive fun, and beyond that, it is mostly for the competition and camaraderie.

**Fitness.** If you've read a paper recently, you've undoubtedly read about the declining fitness of America's Youth. It is your charge to instill among your players a lifetime appreciation of cardiovascular exercise and fitness. This goes way beyond hard pec's and pumped calves. It means developing a fit mind, spirit and body. Always include warm-up and conditioning exercises in your practice sessions, and NEVER use running laps, sit-ups, push-ups or any other physical activity as punishment. The player will begin to associate punishment with exercise. And this is bad.

**Teamwork.** Young players are very egotistical or 'me' oriented and have very little awareness of the team or 'us'. So try to balance your team by equalizing skills, sizes and abilities. Having strong players 'mentor' less skilled players can help the less-skilled player greatly, and you never know, you might just have introduced life-long friends! And always discuss skill-development one-on-one with each player, not in front of the other players. This keeps the kids from comparing themselves to each other and fostering even more competition.

**Skills.** Depending on the age of your team, you will have to modify the information you teach. For instance, force-out can be really tough for some T-Ball players to understand. Forwards, mid-fielders and defense are difficult concepts for Pre-K and Kindergarten teams. Be sure to [prepare your practice](#) sessions in advance. Practice and review previously taught skills, then introduce and practice new skills. Encourage other skills in your "Team Talks", such as communication and decision-making skills.

**Diversity.** Your team will most likely have good players, OK players and a novice player or two. You'll have players from high-income families and players from low-income families. You may have White players, Black players, Hispanic players, Indian players, etc.... You'll have some Catholics, Baptist, Methods, etc... But it doesn't matter. It shouldn't matter. If it does matter to you, you may want to think about your desire to coach. You must treat every kid as an equal, regardless of any of these other factors. And you'll teach your kids the same, something they may not get from their family life.

**Respect.** **Your leadership and example will instill most of these points.** For them to respect themselves, they must feel good about themselves. So, a little praise for minor or major accomplishments goes a long way, and guarantees their respect for you.

- Respect for the game.
- Respect for themselves. This encourages them to take responsibility for their behavior.
- Respect for you, the coach. You will foster this by listening and respecting them.
- Respect for the other players and other teams. Encourage and praise players that unselfishly contribute to the whole team.
- Respect for the Rules. Life is full of rules, so it's easier to learn this sooner than later.
- Respect for the Officials. I know, I know, this depends on the officials. If you have a disagreement with an official, talk about it after the game, or out of sight of the player.
- And while you're in the neighborhood, how about respect for their parents

### Communication

In your role as coach, you will need to communicate with a number of individuals and roles. First and foremost, you will need good communication skills with your players. Then there are parents, grandparents, officials, other coaches, association directors, etc...

### *The Players*

Communication with your players goes far beyond simply giving them instruction. If you took a communications class in high school or college you will remember that more than 50% of communication is non-verbal. Facial expressions and tone of voice also convey a great deal of the communication. Leave the sarcasm at home! Players may place a great deal of importance on anything you may say or do, possibly more

than what their parents' may say or do. Also, although it can be tough with 12 jabbering kids, try to listen to each one, allowing each one to talk in turn.

#### **A few pointers:**

1. Talk to the players' on their level, both physically and emotionally. This may mean getting down on one knee and looking into their eyes as you communicate. Use simple, direct statements that will be less likely to be misinterpreted.
2. Don't wear sunglasses on the practice or game field. Players need to make eye contact with you to fully understand the communication.
3. Be positive, honest and sincere with your players. When trying to correct a particular skill problem, it can be advantageous to make the mistake yourself, and then point out your own shortcomings. Players will respect a coach that is honest. Be positive: constant 'nagging' will only 'turn off' your players'.
4. Tell them what you want to tell them, tell them again, and then tell them once more. Try to reword your communication each time. This will give you a much better chance of getting the communication across with ALL the players.
5. Be loud enough that all players can hear you, but don't scream at them. Clearly understood voice communication will get their attention and your respect. **TIP: In one-on-one communication, a whisper may serve the purpose and be much more effective than a normal or loud voice.**
6. Avoid inconsistent or confusing body language. I.e. don't turn your back on a player talking to you, expecting praise, attention or instruction... Shaking your head while telling the player "nice try"...

### ***The Parents***

After your initial parents meeting you may or may not have a great deal of contact with the players' parents. But, getting them involved on the field / court will leave you more time working with the individual players' and their skill development. If a parent should contact you during the season, you should...

1. Listen
2. Listen
3. Listen

They may be concerned about their child's skill development. I.e. "Johnny makes a lot of goals, but my kid...". Just be positive about their child's development unless you too have a concern that there may be a medical or physical condition that needs attention.

They may think you're a lousy coach, or you just haven't developed a relationship with their child. If this is an anomaly, try to rectify the miss-communication, but not at the expense of the team. It could just be the parents or child's problem, and you probably can't "fix it".

Finally, if you need to talk to a parent, do it after a practice or game where you can speak to them without the child being present. Sometimes a phone call or e-mail will work just as well.

### ***The Officials***

Maybe it worked for Billy Martin, but it probably won't work for you. Yelling at or disagreeing with the coaches will solve little during a game. What it will do is show your players that you are disrespectful of the officials, and they will tend to do the same. If there was clearly a bad call or decision, bring it up after the game with the head official or later at a specially called meeting.

### ***The "Other" Coaches***

Make an effort to seek out and greet the other coach before the game. By establishing an acquaintance, you may be able to accomplish more together than alone. For example, at the first game of the season, you may have some new players that can't play an entire quarter. It is very likely he has the same situation. So the coaches decide to have 'unlimited or free' substitution. Like the official is going to argue with BOTH of you.

I don't think so. In most associations that tend to be non-competitive, the two coaches can then determine the best use of the rules for "THIS" game.

## ***Preparing for the Games***

Well, after all the practices, drills, skills and so forth, you eventually have to field a team. A few pointers to promote your image as THE BEST VOLUNTEER COACH ON THE FACE OF THE PLANET

7. ***Be Organized.*** Figure out your team line-ups, batting order, players by quarters, positions, etc... before getting to the game field. This will provide you more time with the players and less time doing administrative paperwork. For many sports, doing a complete line-up will be difficult, because there will be players who don't show up, or are late to the game. By at least planning the first inning or quarter, you will be well prepared. Have an assistant coach figure out the remaining lineups while you are busy coaching the team, so that at half time or quarters, you are prepared for the next session.  
**TIP:** Having the same assistant coach or another volunteer keep track of important individual player accomplishments during the game can help greatly in congratulating and praising your players. For example, home runs, goals scored, special teams, great block, etc... Also note outstanding examples of determination, concentration and teamwork and make these important accomplishments in your after-game Team Talk.
8. ***Arrive early*** so that pre-game warm-up's can be done. This will also give you or your assistant a good idea of who is and isn't going to be there at the start of the game.
9. ***Introduce Yourself.*** Make an effort to introduce yourself and talk with the other coach briefly before the game. You never know, you may learn something and make a new friend. Also speak and introduce yourself to the officials, scorekeepers, etc.... There may be some local ground rules that need to be covered, or some rules involving inclement weather, etc...
10. ***Pre-Game.*** If you belong to an association, you may be required to have a pre-game pledge or meeting with the other team. Be sure you're well informed in either case.
11. ***Team Talk.*** Have a mini pre-game Team Talk. Reinforce the skills they have learned and how they can be utilized in the game. Emphasize teamwork and the need to do so. Don't focus on winning; this only accentuates disappointment should the outcome not be in your favor.
12. ***Play Well.*** Encourage. Be supportive of accomplishments. Say something positive to every player. Correct your player's actions on a one-on-one basis, not in front of the other players. Show respect for great play by your opponents. Let all the players' play an equal amount of time.

***Don't Yell.*** Don't loose control. Don't criticize or insult the officials; this only undermines the players' sense of fair play and respect for the rules. If you don't understand an officials' ruling, talk to them about it, but do not get into an argument about it.

**NOTE:** *If there were officiating problems or problems with the other teams play or players, DO NOT bring this up now. You have a team that needs praise and congratulations, regardless of the outcome. There will be plenty of time for discussion of problems later, most appropriately, after the kids have left the field.*

13. ***Be Supportive.*** Hopefully your team won, but there's only a 50/50 chance. Whether you won or lost, be supportive of your players, and lineup the team for an after-game handshake with the other team.
14. ***Praise, Praise, Praise.*** Have an after-game Team Talk. Since refreshments will most likely be served, (and at the very least, water should be available) use this opportunity to praise an accomplishment that each player had on the field. ("Great goalie", "Excellent Batting", "Two home runs", "Incredible defense", etc...) Get the players to discuss the game and see where they feel they need improvement and implement this in your [Practice Plan./basics/forms.html/basics/forms.html](http://PracticePlan./basics/forms.html/basics/forms.html)



