

## **Best Practices—Provide Players with a Positive Environment**

*Submitted by:*

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Most coaches tend to underestimate the importance of their role as a coach. For some athletes, you are a teacher, a role model, or a substitute parent—someone to teach skills and help them become a total player. For others, you become someone they fear because of the importance you and your assistants place on “winning.” If you learn to communicate with a positive approach, you may become the “coach” players remember long after their playing days are over.

Here is one strategy you can utilize to help you become a successful coach:

### **Structure the environment to meet the needs of your players:**

- ▶ *Know your players and why they are participating*—set aside time to get to know each player's name; then, communicate his/her roles and responsibilities and how s/he can contribute to the team
- ▶ *Keep practices and drills fun*—avoid lines; let ALL players participate; match tasks demands with the player's ability
- ▶ *Use effective demonstrations to help players improve skills and learn new skills*—know your sport; give instruction to everyone, not just the highly skilled; learning is not automatic, it takes planned purposeful practice
- ▶ *Keep practices full of excitement*—employ new drills; use change of pace activities
- ▶ *Encourage players to strive for success*—but success is more than just competing to win; competing means striving to do one's best and personal improvement
- ▶ *Encourage your students to become physically fit and to employ good nutritional habits*—learn about the fitness and nutritional needs of your players; be a role model