

COACHING TIPS

Teach/Coach—Teach in practice, coach during the game. Players have enough to think about at the plate without extra instructions from a parent or coach. Pitchers can't learn new pitches on the mound during the game. During the game you want your players to focus on the task at hand. No instruction during the game—instead, make mental notes for post-game talk or a specific skills work during the next practice.

Practice for games—Put your emphasis during practice on situations you actually face in games. Pitchers who throw knuckleballs in practice but never in games, or infield pre-games with throws from first to third—those are two examples. You might as well practice triple plays.

Want it to happen? TEACH IT—You can't ask players to do something in the game that they've never practiced. If you expect a player to bunt, you need to have taught him how. Same with basics like base running, backhand fielding, and whatever else. No one wants to try something for the very first time in a pressure situation with an audience.

Don't say "Don't"—If you want a batter to keep his head on the ball, the instruction is not "don't look up". The worst offense: coaches who say, "whatever you do, don't strike out." Keep your comments positive.

Be Open—Be willing to try new drills, switch player positions, call steals, and so on. Young players like to challenge themselves. Coaches need to share that enthusiasm. Practice with intensity. Players need to leave practice pumped with desire to test what they've learned in a game. Plan every practice allocating time for each drill or skill station. Keep practice moving and keep the players focused. It's the best way to build a team that wants to excel.

A Little Praise, Please—Every improvement, however small, deserves a compliment. One of the best things about coaching is seeing your players do better—individually and as a team. Let them know it—praise even minor accomplishments because they may only be minor to you, but major to them!

Liability Issues

- Do not be with a child and not have another adult present.
- Walk the field before practice and games to check for sprinkler heads, glass and potholes, etc...
- During practice make sure batters and runners wear helmets including areas such as the "on deck" area.
- Make sure water and water breaks are provided.
- Send out information to parents about expectations, team rules and team responsibilities.
- Use common sense when planning practice and dealing with children.