

Building self-esteem confidence



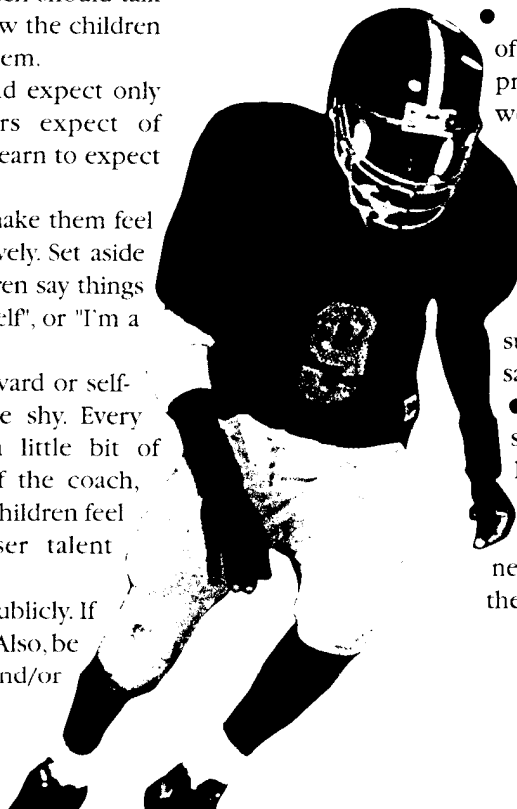
A healthy self-concept is necessary in order to achieve success in both sports and life and it's based on having self-esteem and confidence. Self-esteem refers to a person liking himself or herself and confidence is believing in one's ability to do things.

The following are some methods for coaches to develop self-esteem in their players:

- greet the children individually by name upon their arrival at practice or a game. Tell them that you are glad to see them. This will make the child feel both welcomed and special.
- children must know that they will be accepted as people with no conditions attached. The coach must separate childrens' athletic success from their value as people, and must be patient with the children. The coach should talk to the children and be a good listener. Show the children warmth, laugh with them, and play with them.
- emphasize to the children that they should expect only their (relaxed) best - not what others expect of themselves. It is important for children to learn to expect of themselves only the best they can give.
- teach the children to use statements that make them feel good about themselves and to think positively. Set aside some practice time during which the children say things to themselves like "I feel good", "I like myself", or "I'm a good person."
- for many reasons, some children feel awkward or self-conscious, lack body coordination, or are shy. Every child is different and needs that extra little bit of consideration. The supportive attitudes of the coach, other children, and parents will help such children feel significant. Give participants with lesser talent leadership roles.
- never chastise a child either privately or publicly. If discipline is necessary, be firm yet positive. Also, be aware of your body language. Gestures and/or facial expressions convey messages.

The following are some tips for developing confidence:

- create successful experiences for children. Because not all children perform at the same level, you must set realistic standards for each child. A child may say "I can't do this" or they may be afraid to try particular skills or activities. In such cases, it may be necessary to devise some drills that the child succeeds at and, therefore, give the child the confidence to take new risks. For example, an overweight child may not be able to run as quickly as others in track and field. Shorter distances and personal performance times may have to be established first.
- our children do not need a sport system based on the "all-or-nothing" principle. They require a progressive system that gives them the opportunity to participate and to learn and grow through sport. There is a great deal of variety that can be used in designing such a system. It requires only the will of our sport leaders to design it and the patience of our coaches to implement it.
- teach in progressive steps. For instance, when teaching children to pass in soccer, make sure that they can pass successfully before making it more difficult with a defender. When the defender is in position, he or she should offer only passive resistance before progressing to active resistance or trying to steal the ball.
- if necessary, cite examples of successful athletes who had problems in sports when they were children. If there is a successful athlete in the area, have him or her come and talk to the children. For example, if a child is awkward because of being too tall, you might try to locate (or at least mention) a successful athlete who had the same experiences as a child.
- have children remember successful experiences. They will have both successful and unsuccessful experiences. Instead of dwelling on the negative, get them to think about the positive.

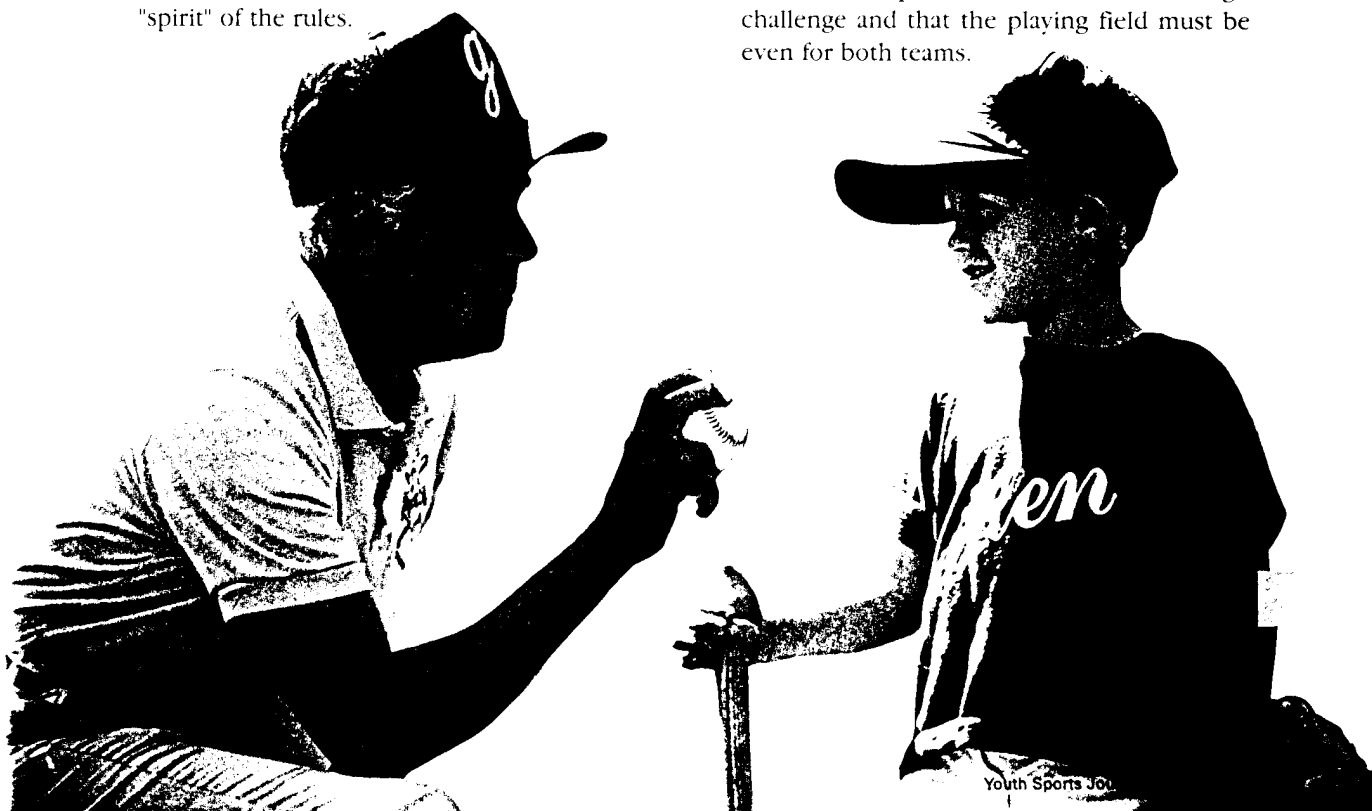


Tips for teaching sportsmanship

While youngsters participate in sports they develop behavioral attitudes that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Coaches have a responsibility to emphasize the importance of good sportsmanship to all their players.

The following are some tips on teaching sportsmanship:

1. Develop a coaching philosophy where everyone gets equal playing time.
2. Don't keep league standings or statistics for the younger ages.
3. Hold parent meetings to reinforce the importance of fun, sportsmanship, and cooperation with others.
4. Take the time to point out examples of both good and poor sportsmanship by professional athletes and discuss their behavior with the team.
5. Reward ethical behavior and good sportsmanship. Make this an important reward and not just a consolation prize. Develop a system of points to be accumulated by your players where awards are received for demonstrating fair play and good sportsmanship.
6. Teach athletes to be responsible for their own behavior.
7. Support officials and field directors in their efforts to control the games and stop any game that is out of control.
8. Educate your players about the rules and the "spirit" of the rules.
9. Stress fair play, civility, and common decency toward opponents and officials.
10. Control problems early and let fans and players know that there are consequences for unacceptable behavior.
11. Let your athletes know that there will be mistakes made and that losing as well as winning is a part of the game.
12. Define winning as doing your best and trying.
13. Teach your team the importance of being gracious in both victory and defeat.
14. Never allow yourself or anyone else to discriminate against or make fun of athletes based on their race, gender, body type, ability, disability, nationality, religion, accent, ethnic origin, appearance, economic level, or parental affiliations.
15. Permit and encourage co-ed play when competencies are similar, but insist on separate but equal treatment for girls when opportunities for play are unequal.
16. Remember that the essence of competition is the mutual quest for excellence through challenge and that the playing field must be even for both teams.



conditioning

The secret to conditioning your athletes

It's no secret that kids hate conditioning drills. They can be tedious, boring, and quickly drain the fun out of any practice session. But it doesn't have to be that way.

The secret is to incorporate conditioning into your regular practice plan so that it's going on but it's disguised in the drills and activities you're doing to develop skills in your athletes.

If you think of your entire practice as a conditioning period, it will become much more game-like in nature.

For example, instead of making your basketball team run laps at the end of practice simply divide the team up into groups and have them run a relay race while dribbling a ball through a series of cones. All of a sudden your practice has become much more productive because you have conditioning taking place along with skill development, teamwork, fun and excitement.

The following are some additional conditioning tips:

- stress the importance of aerobic activity to your athletes (aerobic activity is endurance training which is low to moderate in intensity over a longer period of time; anaerobic training is high intensity, short-term-training; for example, cross country runners require aerobic training while sprinters require anaerobic training)
- athletes should not lose more than 2-3 pounds in a week
- overtrained athletes are likely to drop out
- don't neglect nutrition during preseason conditioning
- remember that different positions of a sport have varying aerobic and anaerobic demands
- athletes need 3-5 days to adjust to their environment during the preseason
- if the sport requires wearing a lot of equipment you should gradually add it during a 3-5 day period
- coaches must be able to select the conditioning program and drills that will prepare the athlete for the stress of competition without injuring the developing systems
- the two systems likely to be stressed the most by participation are the cardiovascular and muscular systems
- strenuous activity that causes pain or is used as punishment (like running laps) has no place in youth sports

Strength

- children gain more benefits from strength exercises that require them to overcome and control their own body weight than they do from special weights or weight training equipment
- children should do exercises for both upper and lower body strength and do them in moderation
- use games that promote fitness such as "poses" where children pose as body builders and tighten and relax various muscles

Flexibility: It's not a stretch to say it's important for youngsters

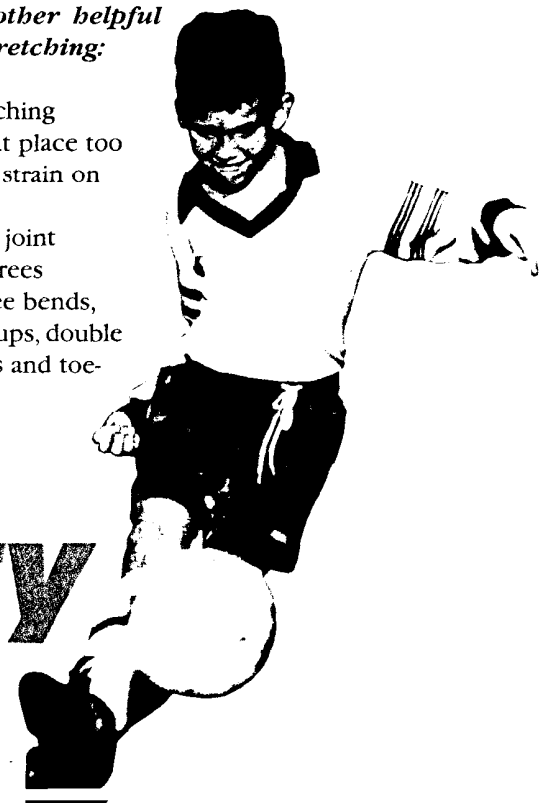
Developing flexibility in youngsters is important for two reasons: it will make them less likely to be injured and more likely to improve their skills. Also, children who are taught to stretch before physical activity will establish good habits that they'll be likely to follow throughout adulthood.

Passive stretching is most beneficial for the child and it's where the individual slowly moves to the desired position, just slightly beyond discomfort, holds that position for a short period of time, and then relaxes. For example, slowly bending down and touching your toes, counting to eight, then relaxing and returning to an upright position.

Ballistic stretching, which is rapid movement to a desired position, should be avoided because it can cause injury.

Here are some other helpful tips regarding stretching:

- avoid any stretching movements that place too much stress or strain on joints
- don't bend the joint beyond 90 degrees
- avoid deep knee bends, straight leg sit-ups, double straight leg lifts and toe-heel raises



Flexibility

Playing defense against the sun

Exposure to the sun is an often overlooked health risk when it comes to youth sports.

The Skin Cancer Foundation (1-800-754-6490) points out that our skin is an excellent record keeper. Every moment we spend in the sun adds up, accumulating like money in the bank.

Unfortunately, the payoff is often skin damage and skin cancer. One in six people will develop skin cancer at some point during their life and at least 90 percent of these are the result of long-term exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

The best defense to protect yourself and your athletes when outdoors is to use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher.

Make sun safety a priority with your team.

Nutrition

A child's nutrition may not be controllable by coaches, but you can educate your players about good eating habits and how it can help them perform better.

- kids need to know that poor nutrition habits will compromise their performance
- candy bars are high in fat and are not a good source of immediate energy
- children need to consume carbohydrates (breads, pastas, starchy vegetables, hot cereals) 3-4 hours before participation
- children should avoid greasy hamburgers, French fries, and carbonated colas before practices and games
- good snacks for children are pretzels, unbuttered popcorn, and low-fat crackers

5 The five components of fitness

- 1) **Cardiovascular endurance** - the cornerstone of fitness and gives children an increased capacity to play and perform.
- 2) **Strength** - children benefit more from strength exercises that require them to overcome and control their own body weight than from using weight-training equipment.
- 3) **Flexibility** - increased flexibility will increase a child's range of motion and help prevent injuries caused by overstretching.
- 4) **Agility** - required in order to make quick movements at various speeds while maintaining balance.
- 5) **Balance and coordination** - demands both the natural development of the neuromuscular system and the ongoing practice of specific movement patterns.

Think safety first

As a youth coach the health and safety of your players must be your number one concern. To help fulfill this obligation the following information should be a part of your practice plan and reviewed often.

- S** - surface inspection. Check the playing area prior to games and practices for debris, holes, slippery spots, or anything else that could harm a child.
- A** - adequate supervision and properly fitting equipment.
- F** - first aid care. Know how to handle injuries properly.
- E** - emergency plan. All coaches must know their responsibilities.
- T** - teach proper skill techniques.
- Y** - you the coach are responsible for the safety and well-being of all your players.

Do you have a first aid kit - and is it properly stocked?

A properly stocked first aid kit is vital for every youth coach to have, and here's what it should contain:

- non-sterile gloves - keep several pair in the kit in the event that you're dealing with blood. This also protects the athlete from possible infection from your unwashed hands.
- small bottle of water and soap - to clean the cut or abrasion.
- Band Aids/gauze pads - to assist in stopping any bleeding, to clean the area and to protect the area.
- Ace bandages - used to hold ice in place over the injured area and to provide compression to aid in reducing swelling.
- flexible splint - used to help control injured areas like a finger or wrist.
- athletic tape - used to hold a flexible splint or ace bandages in place
- sling - controls injuries to the shoulder and arm
- bags of ice - used to reduce swelling and pain. You can also freeze water in small paper cups and then tear off the top of the cup when needed to massage the injured area.
- CPR mouth protector
- scissors
- tweezers
- nail clippers
- pen flashlight
- small bottle of water and an eye cup - to safely and effectively remove debris from a child's eye
- coins to make an emergency call - when your only access to a phone is a pay phone, it's vital to have the correct amount of change.

injuries

Treating the common injury

The acronym RICE is a handy reminder for treating the common sports injury.

R - REST. The injured area must be immobilized and rested.

I - ICE. The use of ice has two basic purposes. The cooling effect is anesthetic and provides some relief from discomfort. It also provides a constriction of the blood vessels and reduces swelling to the injured area. Ice should be applied for 20 to 30 minutes and then removed for 1-2 hours before it is reapplied.

C - COMPRESSION. Compression should be applied to the area that's injured to minimize the swelling and to provide comfort along with rest and immobilization.

E - ELEVATION. The injured area should be elevated higher than the heart level to minimize the addition of swelling to that area.

Dealing with a severely injured child

Assessing sports injuries is an integral role of coaching youth sports. Coaches must be prepared for any type of injury, including when a child goes down and may have lost consciousness. The acronym COACH is a handy reminder of how to respond.

C - are they conscious?

O - are they oxygenating/breathing?

(If the answer is yes to these two questions, move on)

A - ask where does it hurt?

C - control the area that is painful

H - make the decision if you need to call for immediate medical assistance and have the child taken to the hospital.

When you're approaching an injured child, be sure to keep the above sequence in mind. Look at their lip color, feel the chest or put your cheek next to their nose to see if they are breathing. If they are not breathing and there is no palpable pulse in their neck or wrist, you must immediately initiate Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and have someone call for immediate medical assistance. This is why it is strongly recommended that anyone working with children in sports is CPR certified.

If the injury sustained is to the head or neck, the athlete must be calmed and restrained in the position found while emergency medical assistance is responding.

Symptoms

Heat cramps - sudden, painful muscle contractions often caused by loss of body fluids and mineral depletion through sweating or as the result of an acute blow

what to do - gently stretch and massage the affected muscle area and have the athlete drink lots of fluids.

Heat exhaustion - weakness, dizziness, profuse sweating or rapid pulse

what to do - call for emergency medical assistance, have the youngster rest in the shade with their legs elevated and replenish fluids.

Heat stroke - high body temperature, red hot but dry skin; also a rapid pulse, difficulty in breathing, convulsions, collapsing.

what to do - this is a medical emergency and can be fatal; immediately call for medical assistance; place the youngster in the shade and cool the body by removing layers of clothing; while waiting for help to arrive massage the lower body with ice.

Strains/sprains - localized pain, limited range of motion, swelling, and possible skin discoloration.

what to do - carefully compress ice to the injured area and elevate it above the level of the heart to help reduce swelling and provide an anesthetic effect.

Dislocation/fractures - pain, deformity, and loss of function.

what to do - call for emergency medical assistance to transport the athlete. Do not move the athlete.

INJURY TERMS

First degree injury

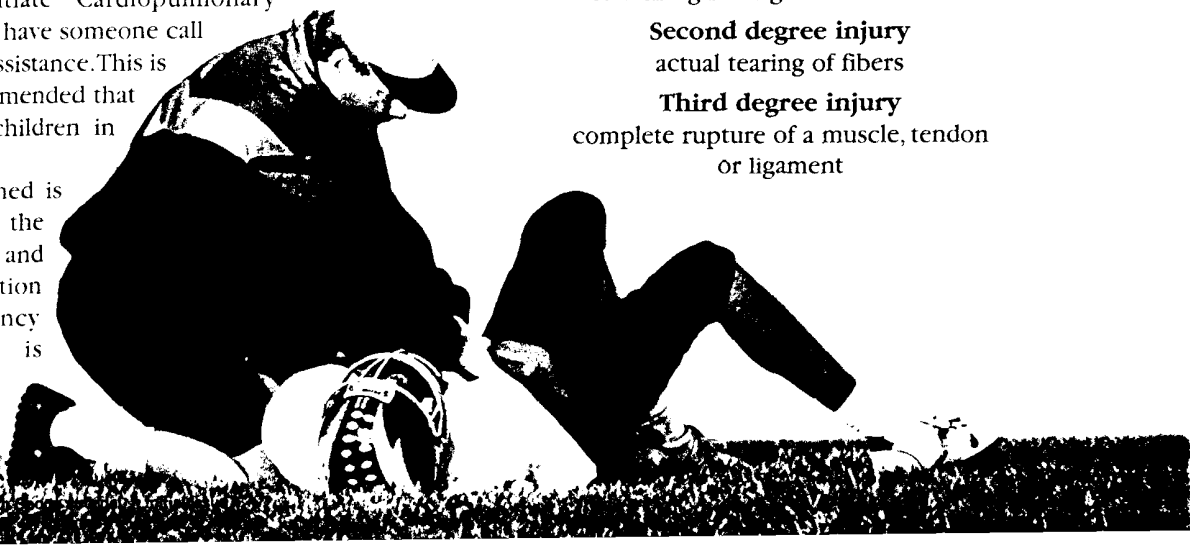
stretching in a ligament or muscle

Second degree injury

actual tearing of fibers

Third degree injury

complete rupture of a muscle, tendon or ligament



Tips for practice organization

- limit practice sessions to no more than one hour a day and three days a week through the age of 12 and not more than 1 1/2 hours and four days a week through the age of 16.
- plan every practice - don't waste valuable time to plan your next move.
- over plan - it is always better to plan for too much rather than not enough activity to fill your practices.
- inform your assistants of their duties before the practice is scheduled to begin. Taking time to teach them a drill or explain what you want them to do takes valuable practice time away from the players and creates the perception that the assistants are really not part of the coaching staff.
- prepare to begin practice with the arrival of the first player. This may mean that you are working one-on-one. You will be surprised how many players will begin to arrive early to receive your one-on-one attention.
- use the same sequence for your warm-up at every practice. You will soon see the team organizing themselves for warm-up exercises and the late arrivals will know exactly what they missed and pick up where you are in the sequence.
- choose warm-up drills that reflect the sport activity. The purpose of warm-up is to prepare the body for more intense activity. Therefore, it would make little sense to only warm up the legs if the activity involves throwing.
- keep your best players from always pairing up during warm-up drills. This is sometimes a natural inclination that can end up limiting the growth of the less-skilled players and also encourages a clique to form that can be a negative for the team.
- provide as many repetitions of the basic skills as possible and make up games using the skills. Relays and other low key competitions work very successfully for both skill development while keeping it fun and interesting.
- stop the activity at the peak of the excitement. Doing so ends the activity on a high note and causes the players to look forward to doing it again.
- teach basic fundamentals in a 1-2-3 step progression. Learn the top three key components making up the skill and teach each of the three components in the proper progression.
- minimize lecture and listening time. Your players will progress quicker if they learn by doing.
- supervise by moving around.
- discipline problems are minimized if they all are kept active. If you must discipline, do so by removing them from the activity and sit them down for a period of time. When they return to play, welcome them back and let the discipline be over.
- use lots of positive reinforcement. When the athlete is not seeing improvement immediately, they become frustrated. If you show a negative reaction they will sense you too are disappointed, adding to their feelings of failure. Always find something positive to say.
- be patient, persistent and maintain a sense of humor. It's just a game.

Tips on teaching skills

One of the most important elements of being a good coach is being able to teach. Good teaching means presenting information clearly and correctly, giving children time to practice, and giving them feedback about how well they performed. In youth sports, this should all be done in a warm, positive, and relaxed atmosphere.

- once the children are good at the skill, use relays and games since this is a good way to practice and it is also fun.
- if children are playing games that involve both offensive and defensive maneuvers, use the following progression when they are learning skills:
 - practice the skill at set position.
 - practice the skill while moving.
 - practice the skill with no opposition.
 - practice the skill with opposition.
- while the children are practicing, analyze their execution.
- if necessary, stop the practice to clarify the execution of the skill.
- when giving feedback, first point out what was done correctly; then point out specific errors and ways to correct them.
- always be positive! Don't be harsh or critical. It isn't necessary for learning and it's not fun for the children. Too many children are turned off by negative criticism.
- use a video camera. This is an excellent way of letting children see themselves performing a skill and of giving them feedback. It also adds fun to the practice.
- instead of just saying that this is the desired behavior, ask some children to role play good and poor winners and losers. This method can lead to an interesting discussion with the children, it's a sound learning method, and it's fun, too.

