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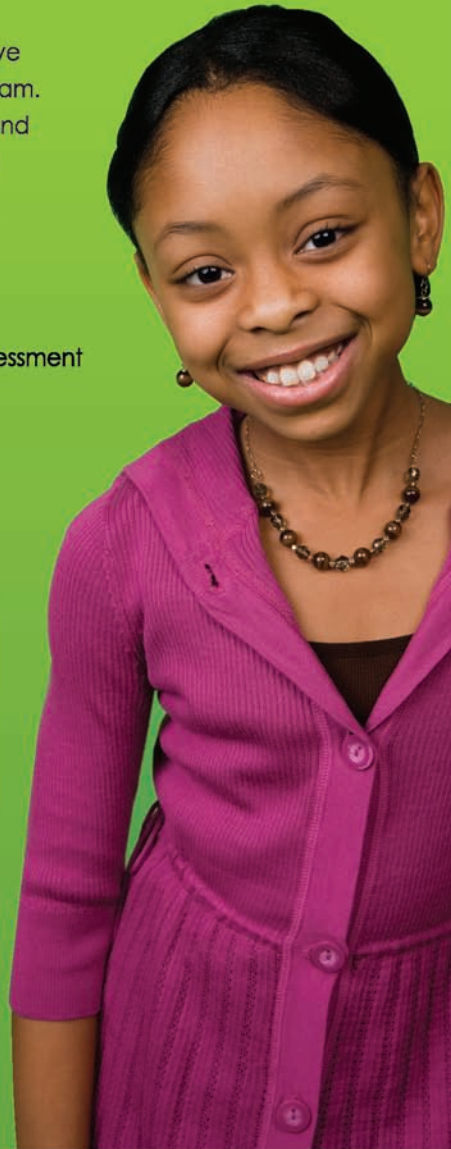
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101

FOR YOUTH SPORT COACHES

TIPS





Adopt an Athlete-Centered Coaching Philosophy

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) believes that an optimal sport experience requires caring and professionally trained coaches, eager athletes and supportive parents. Parents across the country send their children to practices and events with the expectation that adult supervision will foster positive sport outcomes, as well as maximal learning and skill development. Yet, horror stories persist about dramatic increases in winning-obsessed parents, sport injuries, over-specialization of young athletes and children quitting sports because they simply aren't having fun anymore.

The purpose of this brochure, which is sponsored by Polar USA, is to introduce youth sport coaches to the fundamentals of good coaching and to encourage their professional development so that every young athlete will have an optimal sport experience.

1. Accept children's goals for playing — fun, friends, fitness, participation and skill development — and put those goals first.
2. Understand that sport is only one of many enriching activities in which children participate.
3. Provide every athlete with an equal opportunity to develop his/her skills and learn new ones.
4. Develop a positive rapport with your athletes.
5. Ask for and listen to your athletes' thoughts and opinions.
6. Make good sportsmanship a fundamental value for the team.
7. Help your athletes take away life experiences and lessons from sports.
8. Support your athletes in being student-athletes.
9. Contribute positively to your athletes' self-confidence. Set high standards and expectations.

Tip #20.

Model the acceptance of diversity: gender, size, skill level, race/ethnicity, etc.



10. Ensure that athletes and their parents understand all league and team rules/policies and consequences.
11. Communicate your expectations clearly.
12. Explain to your athletes and their parents that sport participation is a privilege and not a right, and that they must adhere to policies/rules and meet team expectations.
13. Enforce policies/rules consistently and fairly.
14. Create a sense of ownership for individual and team behavior among your athletes.
15. Provide athletes with responsibility and leadership opportunities.

Prioritize Team-Building

16. Provide clear expectations about teamwork.
17. Work together with athletes to set team and individual goals.
18. Teach athletes how to pursue their individual goals in the context of a commitment to the team's goals.
19. Use teachable moments to discuss real-life examples of positive and negative teamwork.
20. Model the acceptance of diversity: gender, size, skill level, race/ethnicity, etc.
21. Recognize and publicly praise each athlete's strengths.
22. Encourage athletes to support and praise one another.
23. Use team meetings or other forms of team talk as opportunities for athletes to voice their ideas, questions and concerns.
24. Look for additional team-building opportunities outside of practice and competition.
25. Consider the pros and cons of various options for "formal" athlete recognition.
26. Instill a sense of pride in your athletes about their contributions to the team.

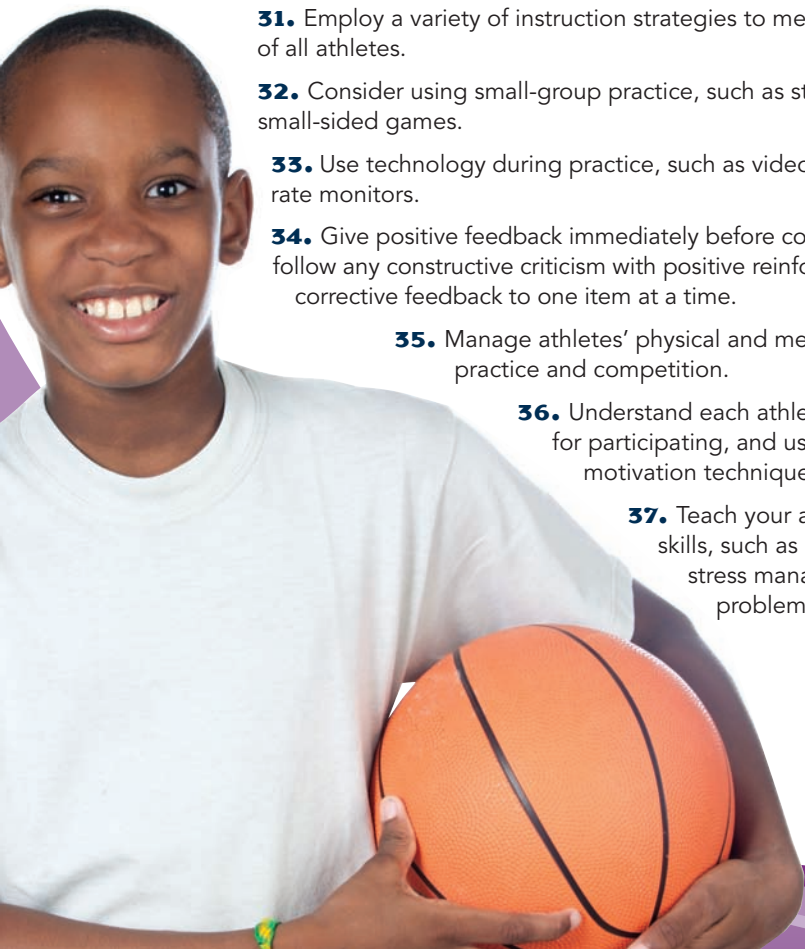


Tip #33.

Use technology during practice, such as video and heart rate monitors.

Use Good Instruction Techniques

- 27.** Understand that instruction and motivation techniques are keys to your athletes' developing skill, self-confidence and enjoyment.
- 28.** Set goals and plan instruction based on your athletes' age and developmental and skill levels.
- 29.** Develop a season plan, as well as a plan for each practice and competition.
- 30.** Use progressions, from simple to more complex, for learning and practicing skills.
- 31.** Employ a variety of instruction strategies to meet the needs of all athletes.
- 32.** Consider using small-group practice, such as stations and small-sided games.
- 33.** Use technology during practice, such as video and heart rate monitors.
- 34.** Give positive feedback immediately before corrective feedback, follow any constructive criticism with positive reinforcement, and limit corrective feedback to one item at a time.
- 35.** Manage athletes' physical and mental fatigue during practice and competition.
- 36.** Understand each athlete's motivation for participating, and use a variety of motivation techniques.
- 37.** Teach your athletes mental skills, such as concentration, stress management and problem-solving.



Use Heart Rate Monitors as an Instruction Tool

- 38.** Strap on heart rate monitors to get an objective measure of each athlete's effort, intensity and fitness.
- 39.** Calculate your athletes' average target heart rate zones by using 220 minus their age to estimate their maximum heart rate.
- 40.** Determine your athletes' resting heart rates by having them lie on their backs in a quiet room with the lights off for five minutes, then record their heart rates. (Resting heart rates usually are lower for more fit athletes.)
- 41.** Teach your athletes about heart rate recovery: the amount of time it takes for their heart rate to return to their near-resting rate. (Fit athletes usually have quicker recovery times.)
- 42.** Empower your athletes to self-coach through heart rate monitoring. For example, teach them that if their heart rate is 90% or more of its maximum, they should take a minute to recover before continuing.
- 43.** Use heart rate monitors to reach your practice goals. For example, if the goal is cardio endurance, train athletes at the higher part of their target zones for an extended period of time. If the goal is speed, agility and power, be sure that each athlete has adequate time for rest and recovery between drills.
- 44.** Look at heart rate data from several practices to identify which athletes are over- or under-exerting themselves. For example, an athlete finishing first in drills but working at only 60% maximum heart rate needs to be encouraged to work harder, while an athlete working at 90% to 95% maximum heart rate needs to be given short periods of rest during drills.
- 45.** Provide proper care of heart rate monitors by cleaning them regularly (e.g., wipe down transmitters after each use and wash straps on a regular basis) and storing them safely.



Prepare Well for Successful Competition

- 46.** Discuss the upcoming competition with your athletes, including goals, strategies and motivation.
- 47.** Advise your athletes and their parents about pre-competition nutrition and sleep.
- 48.** Be prepared on game days with transportation, lineups, equipment, warm-up drills and game strategies.
- 49.** Brief athletes and parents about showing respect for officials, coaches, athletes, opposing teams and other fans.
- 50.** Provide guidance to parents about effective post-game discussion. For example, asking questions such as “What did you learn from today’s game?”
- 51.** Supervise and explain what the athletes who are not competing should be doing.
- 52.** Debrief with your athletes about game performance.

Develop Knowledge and Skills to Be an Effective Coach

- 53.** Participate in all league coach meetings and training courses.
- 54.** Understand and follow all league and sport rules.
- 55.** Obtain first aid and CPR certification.
- 56.** Familiarize yourself with child growth and development as it pertains to the age group(s) you’re coaching.
- 57.** Polish your knowledge of sport-specific skills, strategies and tactics.
- 58.** Read articles and publications to keep you informed and up to date.
- 59.** Learn from other coaches through observation and feedback.
- 60.** Find a mentor and/or be one.

Tip #60.
Find a mentor
and/or be one.

Serve as a Role Model

- 61.** Exemplify high standards and teach positive values, including responsible personal and social behavior.
- 62.** Insist upon ethical conduct and teach good sportsmanship through your positive actions as a coach/leader.
- 63.** Treat your athletes and their parents and families with respect.
- 64.** Maintain composure and monitor your body language.
- 65.** Let the officials officiate.
- 66.** Win and lose graciously.
- 67.** Shake hands with the officials and opposing team after the game.
- 68.** Serve as an advocate for drug-free sport participation and living.
- 69.** Be neat, clean and professional in your appearance.
- 70.** Demonstrate a physically active lifestyle.



Be Vigilant About Athlete Health and Safety

- 71.** Provide adequate and appropriate supervision.
- 72.** Check environmental conditions (e.g., temperature, humidity, surface of practice field) before practice and competition, and modify unsafe conditions and/or make adjustments.
- 73.** Reschedule practice or competition when athlete safety is in question.
- 74.** Require athletes to wear protective gear that fits properly and is worn correctly.
- 75.** Keep athletes' emergency contact information with you at all times.
- 76.** Be prepared to implement an emergency action plan.
- 77.** Carry a cell phone to practices and competition in case of emergency.
- 78.** Be the last person to leave an event and make sure that everyone has a ride home.
- 79.** Submit field and equipment maintenance requests to the league.
- 80.** Be knowledgeable about your athletes' medical conditions as they affect sport participation.
- 81.** Follow privacy regulations related to personal health information (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, HIPAA).
- 82.** Take all precautions to avoid injuries, including adequate warm-up before vigorous activity.
- 83.** Develop the knowledge to recognize injuries and provide immediate and appropriate care.



- 84.** Follow the league's procedures for reporting serious injuries.
- 85.** Allow athletes enough time to recover from injury before returning to play.
- 86.** Confer with a medical professional when an athlete is returning after serious injury.
- 87.** Teach and advocate good nutrition.
- 88.** Be sure that your athletes maintain safe levels of hydration.
- 89.** Provide athletes with accurate information about performance-enhancing drugs and supplements.

Teach Parents How They Can Support Their Children and the Team

- 90.** Introduce yourself and your coaching philosophy to parents at the beginning of the season.
- 91.** Help parents understand the sport and their role in supporting their children.
- 92.** Provide guidance to parents about communicating with their children before and after practice and competition.
- 93.** Keep parents well-informed throughout the season. (E-mail is quick and easy.)
- 94.** Assign a parent to coordinate the volunteer activities.

Tip #78.

Be the last person to leave an event and make sure that everyone has a ride home.



Find more resources for youth sport coaches at www.naspeinfo.org

- 95.** Let parents know how and when they can communicate with you.
- 96.** Require parents to show respect to game officials and the other team.
- 97.** Remind parents that this is their child's sport experience.

Enjoy the Sport Experience

- 98.** Exhibit your love for the sport.
- 99.** Smile, laugh and cheer.
- 100.** Enjoy your athletes as young people.
- 101.** Celebrate individual and team successes!



National Association for Sport and Physical Education

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