

Qualities of a Coach

Coaching styles differ between individuals because of different personalities and different attitudes toward youth sports. Five different types of coaching styles have been identified:

- hard-nosed or authoritarian coach
- nice guy coach
- intense or driven coach
- easy-going coach
- businesslike coach

All the preceding personality traits can be found in varying combinations and to different degrees in each coach. Additionally, there are different reasons why coaches coach. Three approaches have been identified that characterize why we coach:

- social approach - to promote social interaction among players
- self-approach - to gain personal recognition
- task approach - to achieve the team goals.

Once again, the reasons why we coach are made up of various degrees of these attitudes. Coaching styles differ between individuals. Effective coaches, however, illustrate the same basic qualities:

Character Traits:	Skills:
Patience	Manager
Enjoyment	Leader
Responsibility	Teacher
Personal drive	Motivator
Understanding	Uses humor
Conscientiousness	Demonstrator
Positive Role model	Communicator

The important points of the qualities listed above can be combined and called coaching ability. Coaching ability may be described in a concise form by:

- knowledge of the game
- ability to communicate that knowledge
- observation (coaching eye) so a coach may recognize and correct errors in a positive manner.



The Coaching Process

Coaches put their qualities and abilities into practice by following these points:

- planning and adjusting a season as required
- organizing a practice session
- simplifying a complicated skill or tactic to its basic component in language appropriate to the age of the players
- holding players' attention to convey knowledge in a positive manner
- demonstrating skills under game conditions, if possible
- correcting players' actions in a positive manner
- molding players with different levels of skills and knowledge into a functioning unit, with the objective that soccer is a team game
- developing a system or formation of play that is suitable primarily for the team and secondarily for the individual
- changing that system or formation, if need be, for the good of the team
- delegating the necessary administrative duties within the team
- motivating players
- building confidence
- listening to their players.



Psychological Motivation

We talk in our coaching courses about the three elements of soccer that should be incorporated into each practice session. These elements are skills, tactics and conditioning. The psychological development of the player may be added as a fourth element. In fact, player psychology and attitude form the basis for the successful development of the other three elements. It is the coach's responsibility to integrate the following ideas into their coaching:

- develop proper attitude in the players
- develop self-worth by making each player feel important
- make participating enjoyable for the players
- understand player capacities and limitations
- provide proper role model for attitudes and behavior.

The players also have some responsibility in their soccer development with regard to the following:

- Desire
- Dependability
- Dedication
- Determination.

Working together the coach and the player can provide the proper foundation on which to build skills, tactics, and conditioning necessary to be successful.

Motivation

In the coaching cycle, the coach determines what skill or tactic will be taught. During build-up the coach uses incremental steps to develop individual players (or groups). Communicating these steps and providing feedback to players in the form of correction and reinforcement are crucial for obtaining improved performance. Delivered in the proper manner, feedback provides players with a feeling of being rewarded for their efforts. Thus, they are motivated to work harder and perform better.

Because of varying skill levels, a player should be encouraged to compete against oneself instead of peers. Individual goals should be set between coach and player and then work should be directed toward achieving these goals.

Coaches have to deal with both internally and externally motivated players and should work to determine the type of motivation that works for each player.



Motivation Techniques

- Positive reinforcement “opens” the player to further coaching or instruction.
 - Praise the attempt or effort.
 - Correct or reinforce if necessary.
 - Offer further encouragement.
- Do not criticize; always correct or instruct the player in a positive manner.
- Employ the “golden rule.”
- Encourage players to have a positive attitude toward other players. Negative reinforcement by the coach or peers can cause a player to lose self-confidence, impairing performance.
- Ask players for their opinions. How do they feel about their skill levels?
- Use good players to assist teammates.
- Avoid favoritism. Give equal attention to all players.
- Set specific standards and goals for individuals, groups, and the team.

Characteristics of Various Age Groups

Motivation techniques should be adapted to the age of the players involved. While the fundamental concepts remain the same, the coach will want to adopt different styles as influenced by the age of the player. Some characteristics to consider are:

9 to 10 year olds

- Affected by both internal and external motivation.
- Growth is fast in a short span so that anxiety can be created by loss of coordination.
- Still enjoy touching, but some will begin to reject it.
- Attention and retention span is slightly increased.
- Emotional response to stimulus is reduced.

11 to 12 year olds

- Mental and physical skills begin to be balanced.
- Strong need for recognition from fellow players.
- Ball skills are being refined.
- Less need for touching.
- Some players begin to drop out and pursue other interests.
- Occasionally display childish behavior and tendency for horseplay.
- Less regard for adult values.
- Differences between male and female players become more pronounced.

13 to 14 year olds

- Period of physical change, accompanied by mental unrest.
- Mostly better players remain.
- Need for strong peer acceptance.
- Desire to improve skills.
- Players become vocal and opinionated.



Personality Traits of Successful Athletes

Research by Dr. Tom Tutko, sports psychologist, has identified certain personality traits that are shared by successful athletes. The coach can, by recognizing these characteristics or their lack in individual players help team motivation. By building up the individual's less developed characteristics, the coach can help players perform to the best of their ability. These traits are listed below:

Drive

- Great desire to win or be successful
- Concentrated desire toward improvement of weaknesses

Aggression

- Plays hard and stands ground
- Physical, but not violent, play

Coach-ability

- Will take coaching and correction in a positive fashion
- Will perform assigned tasks willingly

Determination

- Player will not give up easily
- Player will work hard to improve

Responsibility

- Will complete assigned tasks
- Does not shift criticism to other players

Conscientiousness

- Attempts to do things correctly
- Does not need constant supervision

Mental toughness

- Can bounce back after error
- Accepts strong criticism

Self-Confidence

- Confident of abilities and knowledge
- Not upset by pressure or surprises

Leadership

- Ability to communicate
- Ability to apply all of the points discussed here

Emotional Control

- Able to control emotion under pressure and adverse conditions
- Not upset by others' mistakes or failings

Trust and Respect

- Ability to trust coach and team members
- Able to trust and believe in oneself



Systems of Play

The evolution of soccer has made it crucial that a soccer coach understand the different systems of play to determine which system best fits the team. Simply put, suit a system to available talent. No system will overcome a lack of basic skills. The coach must assess players' mental and physical abilities before choosing a system. The coach must know the team before a system can be chosen. Players, not team formations, win games. If this were not true, two opposing teams using the same system would always tie. However, two teams that run the same system will emphasize their individual team strengths so that they may play entirely different.

Sad but true, many clubs still are playing 11 vs. 11 in the younger divisions. The problem is that younger players do not have the ability to play any system until they are experienced enough to see what is happening in the entire game and to anticipate how play unfolds. If players are unable to hit a ball 20 yards, it is unreasonable to ask them to execute a 30-yard cross. So, with young players, don't expect too much too soon, and choose a system that fits the team, not a system that fits the coach. During the search for a system that fits the team, the coach must remember that flexibility, not regimentation is the key to choosing a system. When coaching young players, the system will be altered by the ability of the players, style of the coach, and strength of the opposition.

As with principles of play, the coach should complete some basic groundwork for choosing a system of play.

- The coach must think about the field.
- The coach must remember that at each game the team must attack and defend.
- The final question that must be asked is what are the strengths and weaknesses of the players on the team?

Fields: Are they narrow or wide? Are they soft or hard? Are they fast or slow? These are only a few of the questions that each coach should answer concerning fields before choosing a system.

Why ask these questions? First, if the field is narrow, you may not want to run four strikers, it may cause congestion in the attacking area—little chance to penetrate. However, if you are playing defense on a narrow field, you may want to pack it with four defenders.

Each team must attack and defend every time they play: Most goals are scored from inside the scoring zones. The team must look to succeed in scoring zones at both ends of the field.

Strengths and weaknesses of the players: It is important, at the youth level of soccer, that all players are introduced to every position (not in every game). However, when you have chosen a formation, they must understand what will be required from each player at each position. Match your players to the major characteristics required in the different positions.



Characteristics by Position

Defenders

- Goalkeeper: Has agility, sure hands, the courage to pounce on the ball in a congested area, and comes out to challenge breakaways. Also has the ability to distribute the ball and direct the defense.
- Sweeper (roving defender at the back end of some defensive alignments): They are very fast, dependable, and have a better than average understanding of tactics.
- Have sufficient speed to cover opposing players, tackling skills, determination to win the ball, strong leg for goal-kicks, accurate clearing passes, and the ability to head opposition corner-kicks out of danger.
- Be patient and disciplined.

Midfielders

- They have stamina for continuous running and the desire to win the ball.
- They support the offense with accurate passes and long shots on goal, hustle to get back to help defense, while exhibiting strong throw-in techniques, knowledge, and aggressiveness.

Forwards–Front Runners

- Wingers: Speed and ability to cross the ball (pass it accurately into the middle). Wingers should also be able to put corner-kicks into the heart of the penalty-area and be able to create space (running without or off the ball).
- Strikers: They show a strong desire to score and are persistent. They also have good ball handling skills, are powerful, have speed and take an accurate shot.

Remember, no system will overcome a lack of basic skills. The following are a few of the commonly used youth soccer systems.

Soccer Systems

Assume the presence of a goalkeeper and arrangement of the players in three positions: defenders, midfielders, and forwards. The following gives the number of defenders first, followed by midfielders and then forwards.

2-3-5 System

(one of the very first systems to be employed)

- Center midfielder becomes an attacking player.
- Wing midfielders are defenders and attackers.
- Powerful attack, usually one more forward than defender.
- Midfielders must be good defensively.



- Defenders must have a high work-rate capability and must work well with midfielders and other defenders.

3-4-3 System

- Four midfield players given attacking or defensive responsibilities.
- Gives good control of midfield.
- If your opponent uses 4-2-4, then you have one less player on defense than opponent has on offense and vice versa.
- Help is essential from midfield on both attacking and defending.

3-3-4 System

- Common 11-a-side formation.
- Used to attack a 3-defender system.
- Good attacking power and adequate midfield control.
- Midfielder help required on defense.
- Requires good defensive play.

4-2-4 System

- Midfielders - linking attacking and defending must have high work-rate capability.
- Offers great potential for player movement; defender can overlap or support wing play.

4-3-3 System

- Center midfielder must support attack while other midfielders assume defensive coverage.
- Defenders must also assume attacking responsibility.
- Allows good player movement.
- Demands high work-rate in midfield.

4-4-2 System

- Midfield play must be the attacking and defending link.
- Nine plus players can be defensively oriented.
- There are no true wingers.
- Outside midfielders move forward to create width.
- Front runners need to be very organized.

Summary

- Remember, suit system to available talent and the physical and environmental conditions.
- No system will overcome a lack of basic skills.
- The coach must assess the players' mental and physical abilities before choosing a system.
- The coach must know the team before a system can be chosen.
- Players, not team formations, win games.
- When playing short sided (fewer than eleven), the principles of these systems can still be employed by simply reducing the members proportionally. For example, a 3-4-3 could become a 2-3-2 for 9-a-side.



Objectives and Principles of Play

What are the “Principles of Play”?

To start with you must not confuse the OBJECTIVES of the game with the Principles of Play:

OBJECTIVES ARE: AMBITION, PURPOSE, INTENT, ENDEAVOR, and the goals you plan to attain...

PRINCIPLES ARE: The MANAGEMENT of play, The LAWS of play, the CONDITIONS of play, The RULES of play.

The principles of play will help you achieve your objectives.

Look at it this way for now. Your playing objective for every game is to score more goals than you give up. How you do that will depend on how strong your principles of play are or how weak your opponent's principles of play are.

Coaches must UNDERSTAND the “principles of play” if they are to be successful. They are the foundation of all coaching strategy. The Principles of Play are your coaching introduction to tactics.

Youth Players (under 19), in general are not concerned with Principles of Play. Their main interest is in scoring. They want to put the ball in the back of the net more times than the other team.

As a coach you need to help your players understand the Principles of Play, so they will appreciate the entire game of soccer. The Principles of Play serve as a set of permanent criteria you can use to evaluate the efforts of your team.

In soccer there are no absolutely correct decisions. And you cannot always judge how well your team is playing by the results. Opponent may be strong or weak. The score most likely will not be an accurate reflection of how well your team is playing. You need to have a standard method of assessing your team from moment to moment. The Principles of Play are your measuring stick.

Attacking Principles / Defending Principles

- There are five attacking and five defending principles of play.
- THE ATTACKING PRINCIPLES ARE: Penetration, Depth, Mobility, Width, Creativity
- THE DEFENDING PRINCIPLES ARE: Delay, Depth, Balance, Concentration, Composure



Attacking Principles in more detail:

- Penetration is: Advancement
- Depth is: Supporting teammates (to provide help)
- Width is: Attacking opponents on a broad front.
- Mobility is: During play, the changing of the location of play to provide opportunities for advancement and possession by creating numerical advantage.
- Creativity is: Attacking with elegance, style and flair.

Defending Principles in more detail.

- Delay is: Slowing down the attackers until defense is regrouped and can attempt to regain possession.
- Depth is: Supporting the players challenging the ball in case the player is beaten.

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- Delay is: Slowing down the attackers until defense is regrouped and can attempt to regain possession.
- Depth is: Supporting the players challenging the ball in case the player is beaten.
- Concentration is: Squeezing the offense into a confined area to make them more predictable.
- Balance is: Providing an equal or greater number of defenders than the offense at the point of attack, simultaneously covering the vital area (near the goal).
- Concentration is: Squeezing the offense into a confined area to make them more predictable.
- Composure is: Defending under control.

There is an ATTACKING PRINCIPLE to counter each DEFENDING PRINCIPLE.

For each attacking principle, there is a defending principle to counter it.

Attacking	COUNTERED BY	Defending
Penetration		Delay
Depth		Depth
Width		Concentration
Mobility		Balance
Creativity		Composure

Attacking/Defending Objectives

Attacking Objectives

- Score
- Advance
- Maintain possession

Defending Objectives

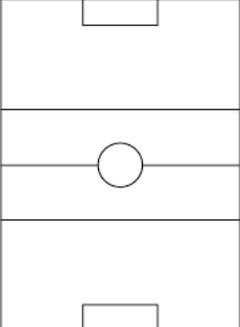
- Stop Scoring
- Delay
- Regain possession



Which is the most important game objective? It all depends.

It depends on the relative POSITION of:

- The ball
- The player
- The player's teammates
- His or her opponents

	Field position	Own team with ball	Opponents with ball
	Opponent's 3rd	Score Advance Possession	Regain possession Delay
	Midfield	Advance Possession	Delay Regain possession
	Own 3 rd	Possession Advance	Stop scoring Regain possession

When teaching the objectives of Soccer:

- Your first step is to give your players an understanding of the priorities based on field and ball position.
- Remember these are concepts and young children sometimes have a problem conceptualizing. So, do not push concepts - teach them to your players.



Coaching Cycle

Coaching is easier and more fun if a systematic approach to teaching players is adopted. To communicate effectively, it is important that coaches acquire a knowledge of the coaching process and the methods utilized to develop players (Figure below).

Match Characteristics

Soccer matches exhibit characteristics of the following:

- shooting
- short play combined with long play
- risk of shooting or advancing vs. the safety of maintaining possession
- transition from attacking to defending, and vice versa (role reversal).

The degree and quality of the above characteristics are reflections of the participants' abilities and degree of understanding of the game. To develop good players, practices should reflect the desired game characteristics. These are achieved by slowly changing the organization of the practice as it builds up to match conditions.



Regardless of what is taught or how it is taught, players should be provided the reason why they are practicing certain elements of the game. Within the limits of their age brackets, players can be provided principles of play that support the game's objectives. These are not taught separately but are integrated into the practice organization. Thus, as the organization of the practice is changed to include more and more match characteristics, players are provided with more of why the game is played in a certain manner.

Elements of Practice - What Is Taught

To play the game, players need the elements of the sport:

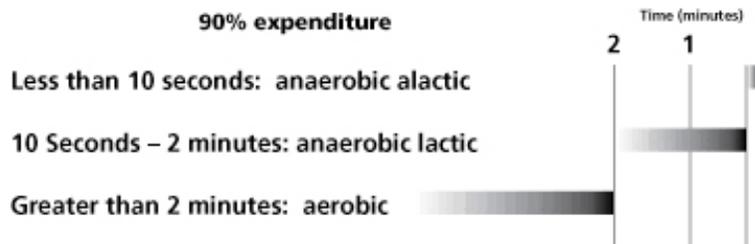
- Skills - dribbling, ball control, passing, shooting, heading, tackling, and goalkeeping.
- Tactics - executing the principles of play as an individual, in small groups, and as a team member.
- Conditioning - increasing the body's ability to expend energy in a more efficient manner.

Practice time is limited, therefore coaches should design practices to integrate all three elements. Avoid drills that emphasize one aspect to the exclusion of the others. The major emphasis for youth, however, should be oriented toward skills-the least emphasis on conditioning. Soccer is primarily a game involving anaerobic alactic (sudden sprints) and aerobic (jogging throughout the game) systems. Conditioning involves training these systems by varying the intensity, duration, volume, and repetition rate of energy expenditure. Tests have shown that for kids in the pre-puberty stage (less than 12 to 14 years-old) there is little difference between a highly conditioned player and the normal active youngster.

The energy systems are related to a time expenditure as follows:

Maximize the number of opportunities to touch the ball. The coach should avoid long lectures, be positive, and keep things fun.

TIME ENERGY SYSTEM



Match Pressure - Controlling the Practice

Practices should simulate as much as possible the pressures players experience during match conditions. The challenge for the coach is how to vary the simulated pressure under controlled conditions. This may be done by doing the following:

- changing the physical SPACE available to the players,
- varying the SPEED of play, and
- varying the amount of OPPOSITION.

Change pressure to meet the players' capabilities. Start with opportunities for success, then build up pressure to increase the degree of skill or tactical execution.



Build-up to Match Conditions - Organizing the Practice

From the time of the players' arrival at practice, the coach should seek to gradually build up play to approach that of a match. The process of developing the flow of action in practice, material taught over a whole season, or to the level of play during a match (as the "attack" was built up) is as follows:

Start practices with warm-ups to physically and mentally prepare players for the session.

Create an opportunity to evaluate a player's ability to execute a certain skill or task. Use free play to observe the player's capabilities.

- Free play describes the condition where individuals play without restrictions on time or space. Players are given general directions on what they should attempt to accomplish and then are left on their own. The players should play hard and stop for frequent rests. Exploring self and ball allows players to develop natural abilities.
- Free play avoids wasting time organizing lines, capturing wandering kids, etc.
- During free play, players learn to avoid others, seek open space, become more aware of action around them, etc.
- Coaches' observational powers will increase as they are forced to isolate individual action in group movements.

Provide an environment for teaching solutions (options) to match problems. Typical methods include those below:

- Simple motor exercises used to duplicate movements employed by players during execution of a skill.
- A drill requiring organization of the players to repeatedly execute a specific skill or tactic, or combination thereof: Common practice is to start with a "static" drill then progress to a "dynamic" situation. This should be done as quickly as possible.
- Use of a grid, either a square or rectangle with corners defined by some sort of marker (cones or shirts): The coach can put players into manageable groups by varying the number of grids. By varying the dimensions, the amount of match pressure (space, speed of ball) can be changed to meet the player's skill level.
- Pressure drill repetitively testing a player's reflexive action. Pressure comes from execution at a high work-rate. Restrict workloads so players' anaerobic alactic systems are not overloaded (generally, less than 10 seconds, with two minutes of rest between drills). Exercise extreme caution with younger players.

In summary, coaches should seek high repetition rates in their drills and maximum ball touches in the time allotted. Avoid having players standing around for long periods. During rest intervals try to include some sort of ball work such as juggling, or have the players study their teammates' technique.

Final hint: Don't run a single drill too long. Most players get bored in less than five minutes. If the sequence of drills has been properly selected, however, increasing challenge to the players' skill levels should maintain their interest. Efficient organizations are effective means of communicating knowledge.



Establish a match-type situation so players can use their judgment to apply lessons learned. Generally, this could be some sort of small group game involving the keeping of score and encompassing the characteristics of a match.

While these situations are usually left as unstructured as possible, a game occasionally is restricted or a “condition” is imposed. A “condition game” is employed to emphasize a particular skill or tactic (i.e., control all balls before passing). Lift the condition when the point is made and permit the players to play for fun. Introduce only one condition at a time.

A short-sided scrimmage of 6 vs. 6 is preferable to a full-scale 11-per-side “practice game,” with the team sharing the other half of the field. With only 6-a-side, the number of ball touches is doubled, the decision-making process is simplified, and the coach has more opportunities to study and correct players’ performances.

In summary, the coach must always remember to go from the simple to the complex, communicating in language appropriate to the age of the players.

Teaching and Coaching Skills

During build-up, employ the following presentation techniques:

- Get players’ attention.
- State the objective. Make a short statement (one or two sentences) on the tactical objective that’s geared to the age level of the players.
- Demonstrate. Use key, age-oriented words (“Hit the ball with the shoelaces” for younger ages versus “Keep the ankle locked down and hit the ball with the top of the instep” for older ages).
- Involve the players. Repeat demonstration with player(s). If several players are required, build up the positions with specific instructions.
- Involve remaining players.
- Circulate and correct.
- Be positive.
- Use an assistant coach to supervise play and keep the organization running.
- Analyze skills by observing whether:
 - o player uses all joints that could be used in proper order (from large to small)
 - o player uses strength and impulse flexibility to generate maximum impulse. Start from bent or flex position, straightening joints in correct order.
 - o player generates proper direction with body or ball
 - o player executes skill from a stable position
 - o specific technique is employed as described in the following chapters
 - o player exhibits correct use of arms when kicking the ball
- Communicate individual instruction, using concepts of psychological motivation and also by the following:
 - o key word usage: specific, not general
 - o additional visual demonstration
 - o addressing changeable behavior: shoot for small steps that build up overtime
 - o constructive (not destructive), positive and informative corrections



- o immediate corrections: don't wait for a later time.
- Always try to give instructions in a positive manner with the players' backs to the sun. Wait for noises to abate and keep instructions short. Try to follow the teaching and coaching techniques for every segment of build-up during the practice session. Avoid excess verbiage.

Maximizing Coaching Opportunities

Keep in mind that coaching is a one-to-one relationship. Unfortunately, the majority of practice time, simply due to the number of players, is spent teaching (one to a group). Therefore, the coach should learn to recognize those opportunities to provide individual instruction. Using the proper organization will also help the coach to maximize these possibilities.

Coach the attack: players with the ball and players off the ball.

Coach the defense: as opposition is built up during drills or short-sided games, take the time to coach the defenders. This is also a way to increase the pressure on attacking players who have learned to solve pressures from uncoordinated or unskilled defenders.

Select the proper player combinations: During skills and tactical training, group players to maximize their development. This does not necessarily mean strong with strong and weak with weak. Frequently, it is more on a personality basis. During ball control, for example, a weaker player could serve a ball by throwing it to a stronger player, while the latter returns a chip. Or two weaker players might be grouped with a stronger player to provide stiffer opposition, learning to work together as a team. When working in small group games, sometimes a single or pair of weaker players can be rotated in and out of the skilled group, raising their skills without detracting from the level of play. At some point, however, the stronger players will want to work together, and this opportunity should not be denied.

Summary

A coach should use a systematic approach to help in communicating with and training players. Practice is an attempt to duplicate a match in a learning environment. The goal is to build up to match conditions so the play reflects shooting, short and long play, risk, and transition from attacking to defending. To acquire this capability, players are trained using elements of skill development, tactics, and conditioning. The achievement of match pressure while working in these areas can be simulated by controlling space, speed, and opposition. Organize practice to build up to match conditions utilizing exercises, free play, drills, and small-sided games. Each segment of the practice should be communicated in a clear and positive manner. Finally, feedback is provided to players on an individual basis. By following this approach, coaches will find their thoughts are sufficiently organized for them to think on their feet and direct players toward achievable goals. Thus, players will assimilate the material in a rapid and efficient manner.



Team Management

Coaching is a challenging position and can be complicated. As a coach you want to make your life as uncomplicated as you possibly can. Proper team management may not alleviate all your problems, but it can make your life less stressful.

In order to maximize your team potential, you must become a chief executive officer (CEO). If you were the CEO of a large company you would need to plan, organize, lead and control. The same can be said for any club coach. Your success as a coach begins with your ability to plan, organize, lead and control.

This section is geared towards helping you understand the importance of good team management. Good team management must start with a coaching philosophy. You need to write it down; it is important for you to see what it looks like.

If you have a single word philosophy such as have “FUN,” you need to be able to expand on that. How are you going to have fun?

Work on this one. My team philosophy is for each of my players to have fun while they learn basic soccer skills, tactics, and the laws applicable to them, while stressing mental and moral development of each. Players also need to be in proper physical condition appropriate to the age group and level of play.

Putting your philosophy on paper is the easy part. The difficult part is putting on paper how you can accomplish your coaching philosophy. Building your lesson plan to accomplish your philosophy can be simple if you follow a few basic guidelines.

- Make your philosophy attainable. Remember the age group and the skill level of most of the players in the division you are coaching.
- If you are a Division 3 coach, direct your expectations to that level. For example, by the end of the season each player should be able to use heading to clear a ball in the penalty-area. How will this be accomplished?

Example:

- At practice #1 basic heading will be taught (from what book or from whom did you learn the basic heading technique?). At practice #4 directing the ball with the head will be taught (what drill will be used?). At practice #10 power heading will be taught (again what drill will be used?).
- Make a road map to your philosophy. If you do, you will attain it. Remember, the coach is responsible for establishing team goals and for providing the “how to.”

A critical aspect of team management is your staff. Remember the coach is the CEO. All CEOs have a staff. You need one. Many youth coaches fall prey to the “I have to do it all myself” syndrome. No, you don’t. The benefits of having a staff far outweigh going it alone. If you are a great coach, you need to train others. There is always a need for more coaches who have had training from an experienced coach. By having an assistant or



two you can do more individual skill work, or work on different aspects of the game. The head coach may be working on finishing, and the assistant may be working on ball control. You need more than assistants - there are other positions you may want to fill.

What about a team manager (Mom or Dad)? This person can take care of your administrative duties: setting up a calling list, ensuring water and ice are at each game, etc. It is important that you get your staff prior to your team and parent meetings. This way the staff can be introduced and their positions and responsibilities explained. The primary benefit from having your staff positions filled prior to your meetings is that you will have interviewed them and they will have bought into and understand your coaching philosophy.

It is important that you have a parent meeting prior to the start of the season. A parent meeting is helpful in transmitting the team goals and coaching philosophy. The meeting also allows the parents to meet the coach in an informal setting.

Policies regarding schedule, equipment needed by players, substitution, players' positions and missed practices and games should be discussed. Players' and parents' behavior toward teammates, opponents, and officials also needs review. Clear policy statements given at the initial meeting can help avoid problems later in the season.

After you have met with the parents, meet with your players before you ever put a ball on the ground. Explain your team goals and coaching philosophy. Let the players know what behavior is expected of them. Talk about language, how they are to dress for practice, etc.

Now is the time for you to learn about your players. Talk to your players. Ask them what positions they have played and of their experience. This is called "listing your players." It will assist in your appraisal but should not be the final determination. There is value in having players vary positions from those they played in previous years. Remember, it is only a starting point.

At this point you need to chart your players. Make a chart evaluating and recording the following for each player:

1. Quickness - speed over short distances, speed in taking first steps
2. Agility - ability to change direction, running speeds, and feinting
3. Passing for accuracy - inside of the foot "push" passes
4. Shooting - for accuracy and power
5. Controlling the ball
6. Dribbling and driving - for control and speed (for older players, change of pace and feinting)
7. Heading - as a shot on goal and also as a return pass
8. Aggressiveness (Intensity) - attacking and defending (one on one)

Listing your players will give you a better feeling of what each can and cannot do. Remember, coach, you make the decisions on who plays what position. It is important, however, to keep in mind that your players are learning to play the game, even if they are in Division 3. So, let them play. Involve them in decision making. Expose them to many positions. Explain the importance of sportsmanship and always keep the game in perspective.



Team management is an aspect of coaching that cannot be overlooked. If you PLAN, ORGANIZE, LEAD and CONTROL your coaching duties, your time as a coach will be less stressful and much more enjoyable. Good team management is a must if you hope to be successful.

Injury Management

Because BYS is committed to providing a program that benefits youth, preventing injuries must be one of the coach's chief concerns. Many factors influence the number and severity of injuries. Injury prevention can be increased by the following:

Proper warm-up: Unless the body is fully prepared for competition and participation, muscle strains are more likely to result. For younger players, warm-ups create good habits.

Sufficient physical conditioning: While this factor is less applicable to those under 11 years of age, older players will avoid many late game injuries by proper conditioning.

Correct soccer techniques: The techniques used in the game have evolved because they are effective and reduce the risk of injury. Tackling is the most obvious example where an incorrect tackle creates a high risk of injury.

Knowledge and application of the Laws of the Game: The Laws are designed to allow for continuous play with little risk of injury. The "dangerous play" laws deal directly with injury reduction.

Sufficient rest and fluids: Coaching in all sports has come a long way since the days when players were not allowed any rest or fluids during practice. Good coaching and safety require coaches to be reasonable in their practice procedures.

Equipment: Coaches should check that all players are wearing shin guards at games and practices and that all cleats are not dangerous to other players.

Maintained facilities: Coaches should check playing fields and practice areas for unsafe playing conditions. Check for debris, holes, rocks, etc. Do not allow players to play around or upon goalposts. If unsafe conditions are found, fix or report them to a member of the Board immediately.

Injury Management General Guidelines

In dealing with injuries, the coach must at least look competent and in control of the situation. The coach must remain calm so that the injured player and teammates are not upset.

DO NOT

- try to diagnose a serious injury.
- touch the injury but ask the injured player to move the affected area.



- A serious injury will not allow movement by the injured player and will give the coach a clue to the seriousness of the injury.

DO

- seek professional help for all but minor injuries.
- put the child’s welfare ahead of the team’s needs. This is a dilemma all coaches face. BYS’s philosophy emphasizes healthy competition in a proper perspective. Playing youngsters with serious injuries is incompatible with the best interests of the children.
- Is a player ready to return to play?
- Can the player walk without limping?
- Can the player run in a straight line?
- Can the player cut from side to side?
- Can the player execute other demands of the game?
- Is the player safe from further injury?
- If the answer is no to any of these, do not return player to the game.

Care and Treatment of Injuries or Conditions

Sprain (ankle, knee, wrist, elbow)	Pressure wrap, ice for 20 minutes per hour during first 48 hours. Elevate when possible Rest Ice Compression Elevation
Muscle Strain (pull)	Same as for sprain.
Contusion	Same as for sprain.
Cramp	Apply light pressure with hand. Stretch muscle with steady pressure. Ensure play is well hydrated.
Nose Bleed	Direct pressure (pinch nostrils) for 15-20 minutes. Sit player up. Lean the player forward and have them breathe through their mouth – this will drain blood into the nose instead of down the back of the throat
Cut or abrasions	Stop bleeding with direct pressure. Wash with antiseptic. Close with adhesive strip or butterfly. Cover with dry, sterile dressing
“Wind knocked out”	Lie on side or back. Encourage slow, relaxed breathing. Try to reduce anxiety
Heat Exhaustion – player feels cool, clammy, and damp	Move to shade. Douse with cool water. Give fluids
Unconsciousness	Check airway, breathing and pulse. Don’t move (risk of spinal injury) Get help!



Concussion (possible with or without consciousness)	Look for loss of memory, confusion, headache, dilated pupils, nausea. If any doubt, get help! Do NOT send player back into game.
Choking – object blocking wind passage	Use Heimlich Maneuver.
Fracture/Disclocation	Immobilize area. Get help!
Heat stroke – player feels hot and dry	Hospital NOW!

