



**Coaching to Make a Positive Difference™**

**[www.coaching-coaches.com](http://www.coaching-coaches.com)**

## **Table of Contents**

Preface .....	4
What Is Coaching Coaches, LLC? .....	5
Who Is Bill Bommarito? .....	5
Chapter 1 Core Concepts .....	7
Define Your Role as a Volunteer Coach .....	9
What Kids Tell Us about Youth Sports – Michigan State University Study .....	11
Yelling vs. Teaching .....	15
Self-Esteem Techniques .....	18
Chapter 2 Coaching Philosophy, Goals, and Expectations .....	19
Developing your coaching style starts with .....	21
Coaching Philosophy .....	21
Coaching Goals.....	22
Coaching Expectations .....	23
Chapter 3 Pre-Season Checklist.....	24
Pre-Season Planning .....	26
Pre-Season Checklist .....	27
Children With Medical Conditions .....	29
Sample Letters to Parents.....	30
Items to Know .....	32
Team Roster Format .....	33
Team Schedule Format .....	34
Maps .....	35
Chapter 4 Parent/Player Meeting .....	36
Parent/Player Meeting.....	38
Code of Excellence Introduction.....	39
Code of Excellence .....	40
Parent Participation Agreement .....	42
Discipline.....	43
7 Steps to Discipline .....	44



Chapter 5 Individual Wins ..... 45  
    Individual Wins - What Are They?..... 47  
    Two Steps to Coaching Individual Wins ..... 48  
Chapter 6 In-Season Checklist, Practice Pyramid, and Discipline ..... 49  
    Coaches In-Season Checklist ..... 51  
    The Practice Pyramid ..... 52  
    Explanation of the Practice Pyramid..... 52  
    Revisiting the 7 Steps to Discipline ..... 54  
    Weather Conditions ..... 55  
Chapter 7 Post-Season Evaluation ..... 56  
    Coaches Post-Season Checklist ..... 58  
    Volunteer Coach Summary ..... 59  
Chapter 8 Suggested Strategies in Support of Child Safety ..... 60  
    Suggested Strategies for Volunteer Coaches in Support of Child Safety ..... 61  
Chapter 9 Final Thoughts ..... 62  
    Post-Game Show/19th Hole/Wrap-Up Show ..... 63  
References ..... 64



## Preface

## **What Is Coaching Coaches, LLC?**

Coaching Coaches, LLC, is dedicated to the education of volunteer coaches and other leaders who work with our youth in various activities.

## **Who Is Bill Bommarito?**

- Bill Bommarito is the founder and president of Coaching Coaches, LLC
- Grew up in St. Louis and played youth sports for nine years (K-8th). In high school he played football and hockey for four years (St. John Vianney H.S. – St. Louis, Mo.)
- Attended the University of Dayton and played four years of hockey – received his degree in business and a secondary education certification
- Taught business and coached football and baseball in two high schools in Dayton, Ohio, for six years
- When needed, helped coach the University of Dayton hockey team
- Coached in youth programs for 18 years
- Was president of a local athletic association for two years – 750 to 800 families
- Was director of athletic education for two years for the local athletic association
- Officiated soccer and hockey; umpired baseball and softball for many years
- Developed youth coaching handbooks for both coaches and parents
- Started company in 1997 to help educate volunteer coaches
- When the company was started, created a 30-minute video and a 24-page handbook to help volunteers better understand their role as coach and/or leader
- Has trained over 16,000 volunteer coaches, receiving extraordinarily positive evaluations and responses

### **Why are we doing this training?**

- We are participating in this training to make our current sports/activity program a better program for everyone involved.
- Your small investment will pay huge dividends to the kids, parents, your organization, and you as their coach.
- To provide additional methods of teaching, coaching, and leading our kids.

### **“But why me? - I believe I am a good coach/leader - I have been coaching for years”**

- You probably are a good coach, and that is greatly appreciated. However, good coaches and activity leaders, at all levels, continually seek additional training.
- This training program is designed to help the organization set a standard (of coaching/activity leadership) and consistently deliver the same message to all coaches/activity leaders within the program.
- When dealing with our most precious asset – **the Children** – a formal training program is clearly the minimum we should be providing our coaches/activity leaders.

### **Our Rules of Play**

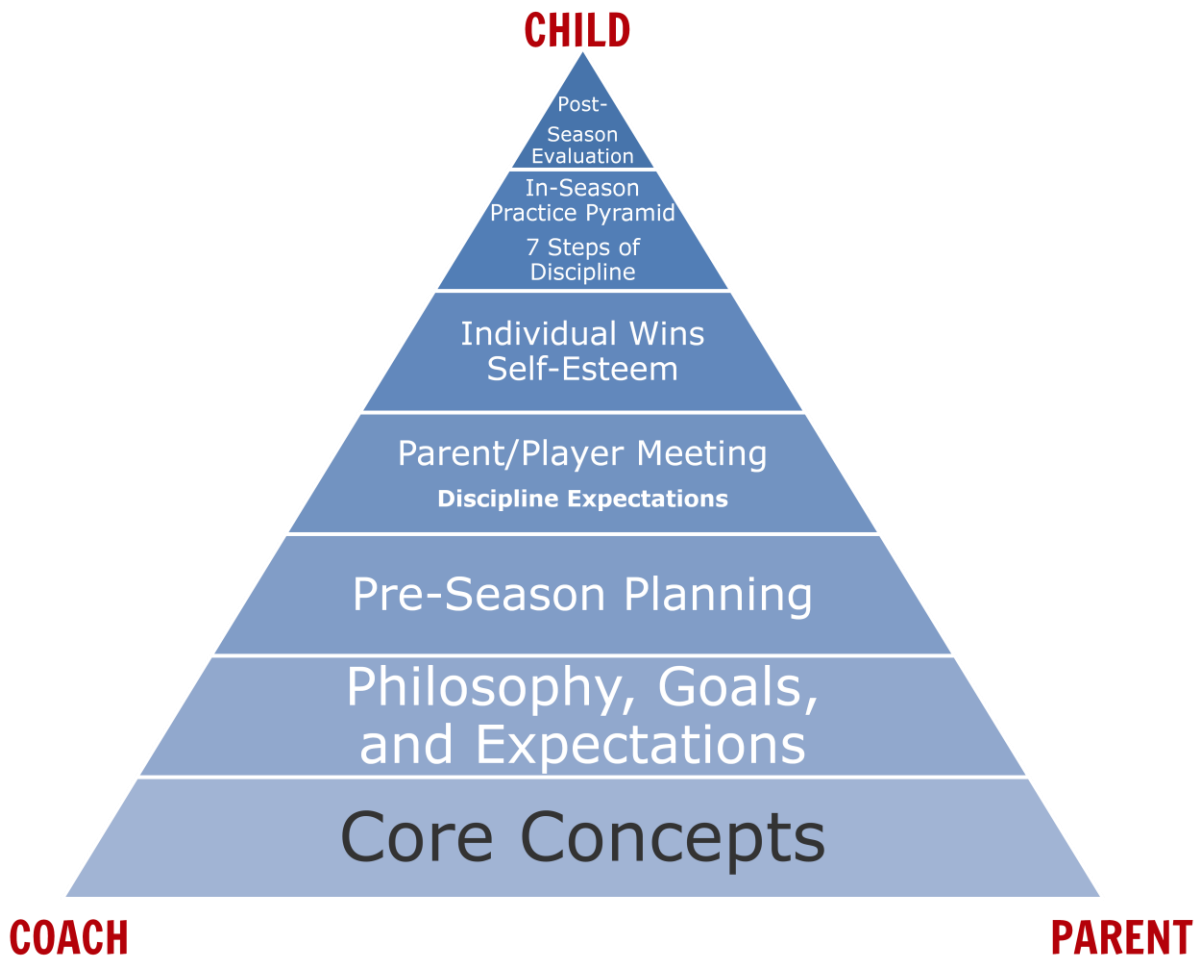
- You will be a better coach or activity leader as a result of taking this training.
- Please take this training seriously and conscientiously.
- The goal should be to pick up 6 to 12 techniques and tactics that will make you a better coach or activity leader.
- Be prepared to successfully answer questions at the end of each video section before moving on to the next video section.
- Complete the training before the expiration date given by your organization.
- Embrace your role as coach or leader. Being as positive and as educated as you can be will change young lives for the better. Our impact on these kids can be extraordinary. Are you providing the best hours of their week, or possibly, the worst hours of their week?



## Chapter 1

### Core Concepts

**Coaching Coaches Pyramid - Core Concepts**





**Define Your Role as a Volunteer Coach**



How do you **define** your role as a Volunteer Coach?

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### Redefining your role

You may consider **redefining** your role

- **The best coaches prove to be the best teachers**
- **“Coach”** means to teach
  - Erudio (Latin) – to teach; to instruct; to educate
  - Facio (Latin) – to sacrifice; to help; to be of service
- Our job is to be a strong role model
- Treat our kids, their parents, fans, officials, the other teams, our administrators, and anyone else with respect
- Become a positive ambassador for your community

## What Kids Tell Us about Youth Sports - Michigan State University Study

The following information comes from a Michigan State University study of 10,000 kids, from 11 cities, and their responses to several questions concerning youth sports. The study was conducted in 1987 by Martha E. Ewing and Vern Seefeldt of the Youth Sports Institute of Michigan State University (YSI – MSU)<sup>1</sup>. After the study was conducted, its findings were reported to the Athletic Footwear Association in North Palm Beach, Florida. The Athletic Footwear Association, at the time, was composed of 88 manufacturers of athletic footwear, and was part of the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association.

("YSI – MSU – Youth Sports Institute hasn't updated the study, partly because it believes if one were done today, it would produce similar results"<sup>2</sup>

### Why kids play sports - three types of players

- **Reluctant Players** – Kids whose involvement comes from peer or parental pressure. Make up about 25% of any team.
- **Competent-Oriented Players** – Practice and play hard to discover their abilities. Make up about 35% of any team.
- **Social Players** – Drawn by external approval and rewards. Make up about 40% of any team.

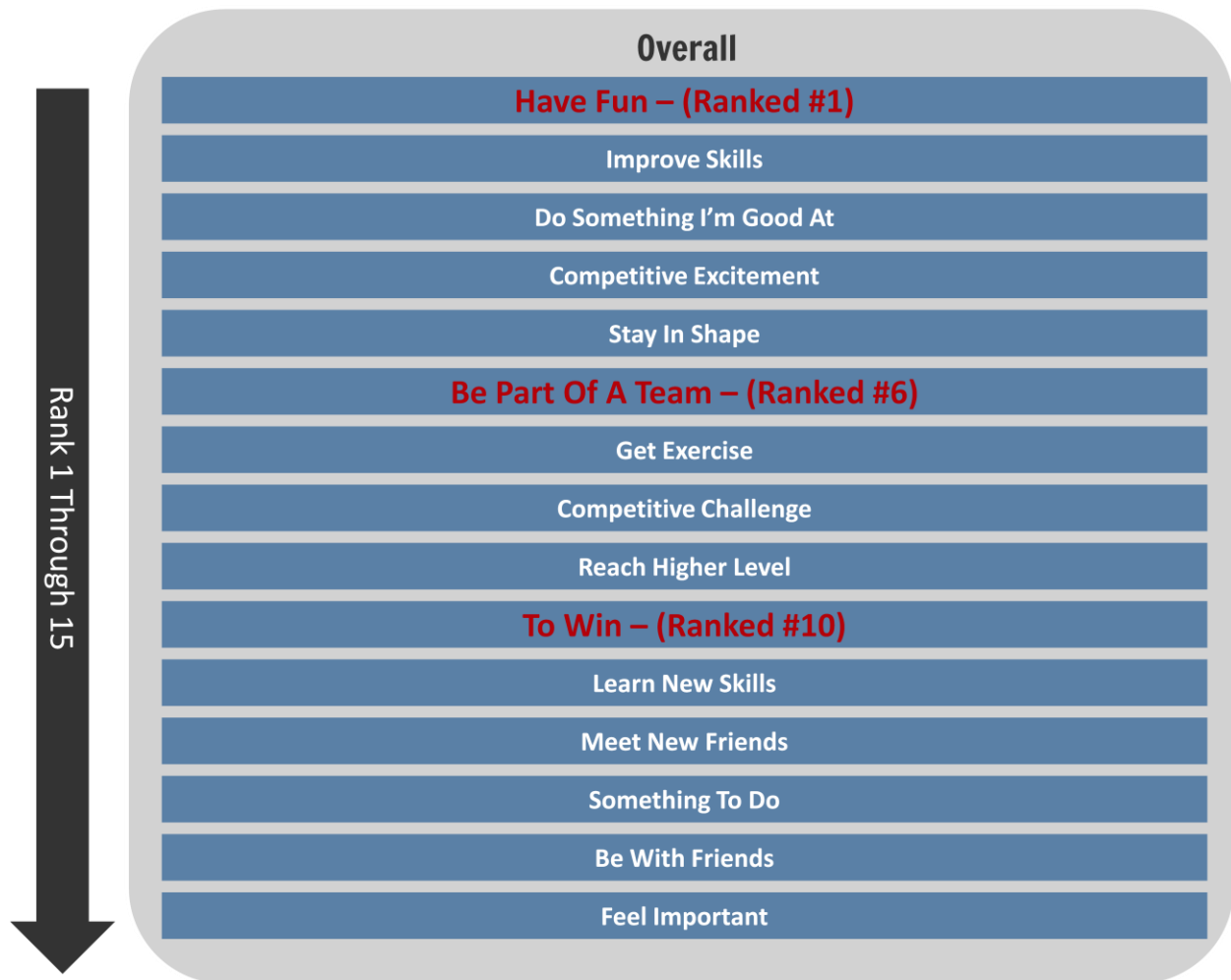
**By player type, the top 15 answers (from a total of 25 phrases) to the question**

**“Why did you want to play your favorite school sport?”**



**Analyze the MSU study when combining the three player types**

Michigan State University Youth Sports Institute assigned numeric values to each response, and when the responses were analyzed, 10,000 kids in 11 different cities were telling us the **No. 1** reason they play youth sports is to **have fun**.



### Some Observations about the study

- **Have Fun** – Having fun ranked No. 1 and No. 2 for the Reluctant and the Social Player, respectively. Having fun ranked No. 5 for the Competent-Oriented Player. The kids have spoken. Work to make your coaching an enjoyable experience for everyone involved!!
- **To Win** – 10,000 kids are telling us that winning isn't nearly as important as **we** think it is. Winning ranked 10th out of the 15 listed.
- **Be Part of a Team** – It almost cracked the top 5 (6th). I interpret this to mean, regardless of whether a child is a Reluctant player, a Competent player, or a Social player, there is a high desire to belong to the team. Each child wants to feel as if he or she is a part of the team. We as coaches have a great influence over the acceptance of every child as an integral part of the team, regardless of a child's athletic ability or status among his or her friends.
- **Learn New Skills** – This came in 11th out of 15 listed. You may consider limiting your season objectives to allow the kids to "master" fewer skills, as opposed to exposing them to a large number of skills and having them master none. Mastering skills builds confidence, gives the kids control, and makes for a more enjoyable experience.

You may say, but "Improve Skills" was ranked 2nd and "Do Something I'm Good At" ranked 3rd. That is correct. However, please consider the following:

- Children want to master a skill
- They want control over that skill
- They want to feel good about attaining that skill
- They need successes
- Successes make them feel good
- Successes breed further successes

## Yelling vs. Teaching

### Why shouldn't we yell at times?

- After all, the real world is tough, not fun
- Yelling gets results
- Sometimes we protect our kids too much
- A taste of the "real" world is not always a bad thing

### When do you think yelling is appropriate?

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### Is yelling ever appropriate?

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### Can there be "different" types of yelling? Explain.

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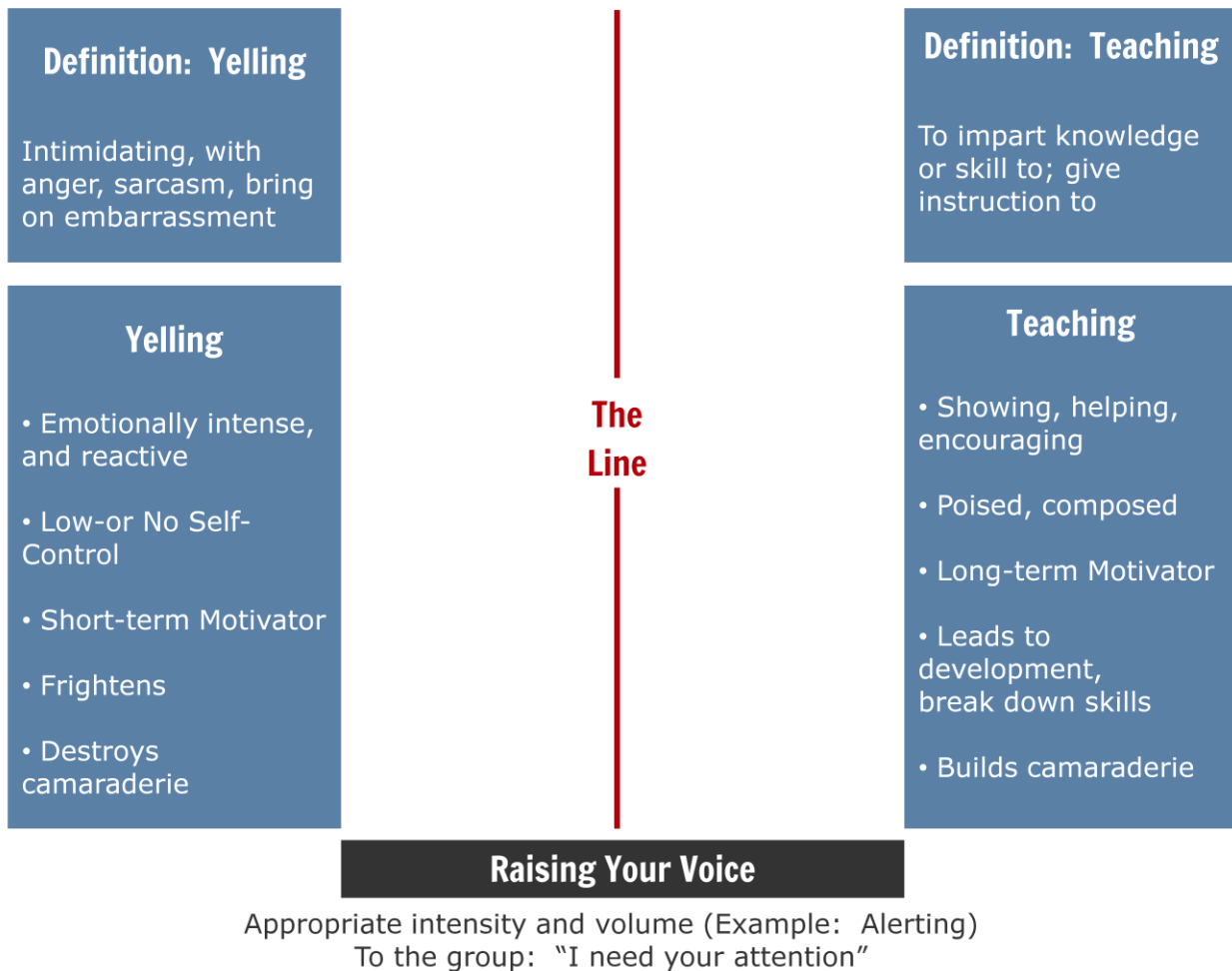
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### **Do you like to be yelled at?**

- Yes    No

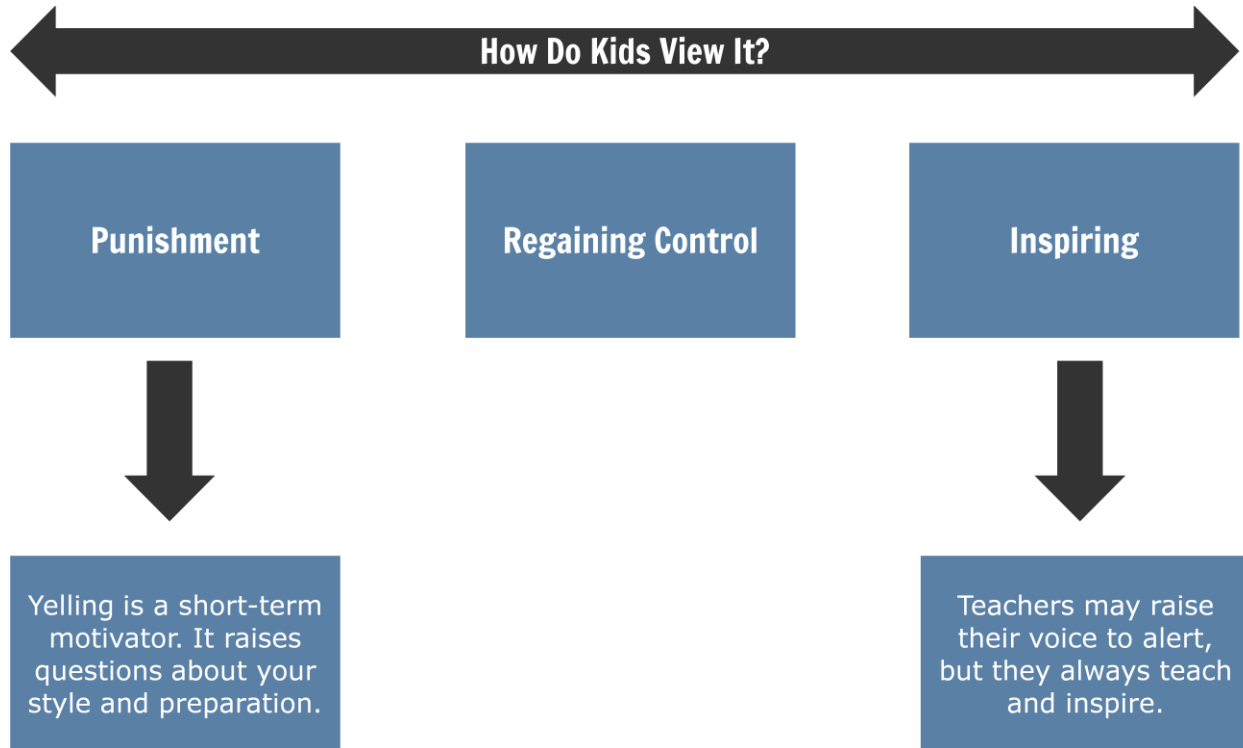
Yelling vs. Teaching

**How can you tell if you have crossed the line?**





How kids view yelling vs. teaching



**The Louder We Get – The Less They Learn**

Coaching points

- The more you are prepared, the more you will teach, and the more the kids will learn.
- The less you are prepared, the chances of yelling increase dramatically, and the likelihood of effectively teaching and learning decrease proportionately.
- Children and parents will remember how you handled the child’s mistake and **the way** in which you delivered the message.

## Self-Esteem Techniques

### What is it called when ...

What do we call it when kids ...

- Feel it's safe to learn (not intimidated)
- Develop abilities (they achieve or grow as individuals)
- Feel like a part of the team (they fit in, belong)

It is called **self-esteem**: Kids learn to see themselves as capable and valued by others.

### Children achieve a sense of -self worth when ...

- They see themselves with abilities in areas that are important (scholastic, athletic, social, behavioral, physical appearance)<sup>3</sup>
- They see themselves as valued and socially accepted by others<sup>4</sup>

### Improving self-esteem takes two things

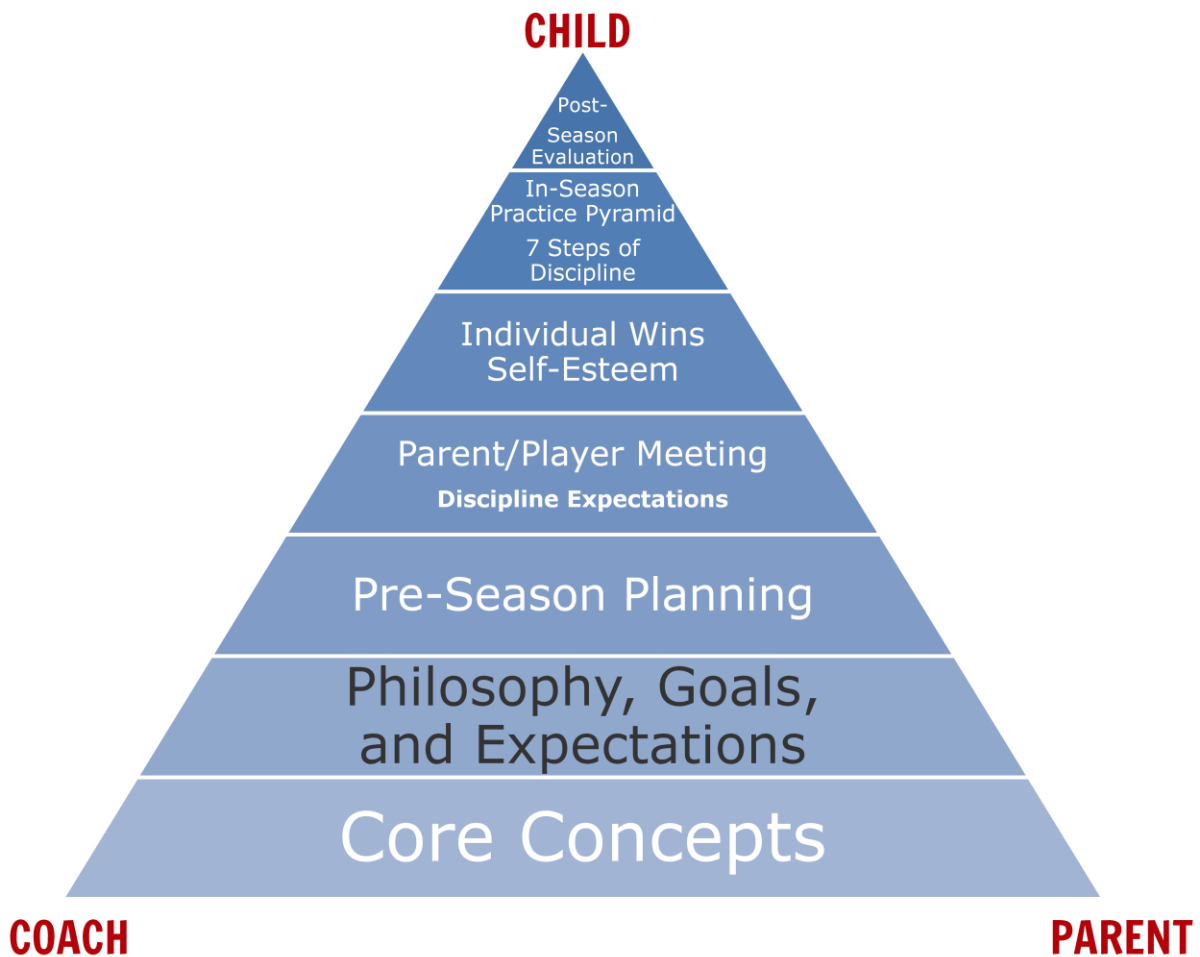
1. A supportive social environment (a supportive coach and team)
2. Realistic goals (age- and **individual**-appropriate challenges)



## Chapter 2

### Coaching Philosophy, Goals, and Expectations

**Coaching Coaches Pyramid - Philosophy, Goals and Expectations**



### Developing your coaching style starts with

1. Your Coaching Philosophy
2. Your Coaching Goals
3. Your Coaching Expectations

### Coaching Philosophy

Prior to developing your coaching philosophy, seek out your organization’s mission statement along with your sports’ or activities’ mission statement.

Based on what we have discussed thus far, what is your “coaching” philosophy? Your coaching philosophy is your “mission.” Some reminders on developing your coaching philosophy:

- The fun factor: where does winning fit?
- Coaching as an educator
- Coaching as a form of giving back
- Kids say they want to be a part of a team
- Yelling vs. teaching, as an ambassador of your community
- What do you want your team to look like?

**Finally, outside of the X’s and O’s, skills and drills, and the strategies of the game, how is your program defined?**

As a coach of children, my coaching philosophy is:

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## Coaching Goals

As a reminder, make your goals:

- Age-appropriate
- Reasonable and, if possible, measurable
- What age-appropriate goals do you really want to accomplish this season?
- What 3, 4, 5, 6, or 15 or 16 goals are really attainable with your team?
- Do your goals tie into a two-, three-, or four-year plan? (assuming you will keep these kids for some time)

As a coach of children, my **specific sport-related coaching goals** for this season are:

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## Coaching Expectations

Making your philosophy and goals real means coaches need to set the proper tone from the beginning. This means **stating your expectations** in three basic areas:

- How can parents expect you to treat their kids?
- How do you expect parents and kids to treat you?
- How do you expect kids, parents, and coaches to behave?

See the Parent/Player Meeting, chapter four, for more details on setting and delivering expectations.

As a coach of children, my expectations for this season are:

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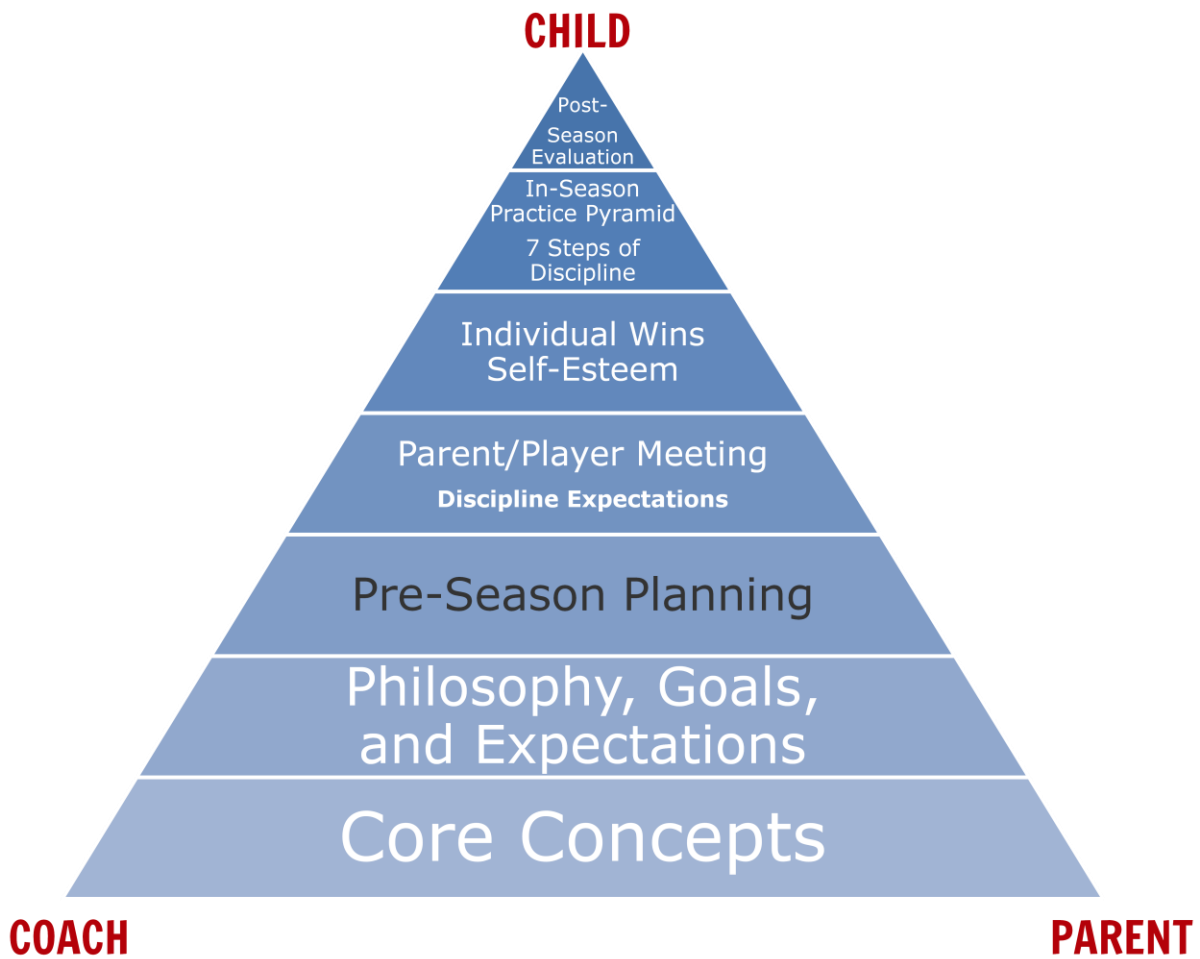


## Chapter 3

### Pre-Season Checklist



### Coaching Coaches Pyramid - Pre-Season Planning





### **Pre-Season Planning**

Pre-season planning starts the process of building the foundation for a successful and enjoyable season for everyone involved (kids, parents, and coach). Your ability to properly prepare for the season will deliver a powerful message to both the parents and kids about your program, your organizational skills, and your willingness to provide the best experience possible.

List action items you think coaches should do as part of the pre-season activities:

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## Pre-Season Checklist

The pre-season checklist is designed to help a coach effectively prepare for the upcoming season and give thought to specific areas of pre-season planning. Specific items to consider:

- Begin to develop your personal coaching philosophy, goals, and expectations
- Start your coach's binder (1-½" or 2" three-ring binder)
- Get your team roster, player registration forms, rulebooks, organization's constitution, coaches handbook
- Know whom to go to within your organization for questions
- Review the player registration forms
- Call each family – make it a positive first contact
- Draft an introductory letter to the kids and parents
- Develop an Items to Know sheet – include any specific organization requirements
- Develop a roster of the kids and **include** the parents' first names and phone numbers
  - Make sure to get parental approval for contact information and distribution to other team members
- Send your first letter (or email) introducing your philosophy and inviting them to your Parent/Player Meeting
  - This meeting could be before or after your first or second practice – the earlier the better – even before your first practice

- Start to prepare for your Parent/Player Meeting
  - Philosophy, goals, and expectations (previously described in chapter 2)
  - The Code of Excellence (described in chapter 4)
  - Parent Participation Agreement (described in chapter 4)
  - Items to Know sheet – for the families (described later in chapter 3)
  - Roster with the parents' names (described later in chapter 3)
  - Schedules (if available) and maps to the fields (described later in chapter 3)
  - Anything else that you can think of to discuss that will help everyone involved strive for a positive experience working together (described throughout the handbook)
- Review the rulebook
- Check the condition of all your equipment and encourage the kids to do the same with theirs
- First aid
  - Ice at all practices and games
  - First aid kit for all practices and games
  - Encourage coaches to attend classes
    - First aid
    - CPR
    - AED
- Develop an injury plan of action

## Children with Medical Conditions

Make sure you educate yourself on medical conditions that may affect children on your roster. Ask the parents if there are any medical issues that you need to know about. For multiple hours a week, over an extended period of time, you are with children who potentially represent a variety of medical conditions. You are no different than a teacher in a classroom. For you to be on top of your game, you need to know as much as you can about each child, assuming the parents are willing to share information about their child's medical history.

If a family shares that information with you, take some time to educate yourself about the condition(s) and prepare effective response plans. Here are some fairly common child-related medical conditions:

- **ADD/ADHD** – Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Children with ADD/ADHD may have attention issues (focus) and potential discipline issues (hyperactivity). Be sure to seek additional advice from the parents.
- **Asthma** – A difficult breathing condition that can compromise a child and his or her athletic performance. Seek additional advice from the parents.
- **Autism** – A disorder of neural development. It can affect communication and social interaction. There are varying degrees of autism. The parents can provide the best method of dealing with a child who is autistic. In some cases, you may want the parent to assist during all practices and games.
- **Allergies** – Can range from very mild to quite severe. In some cases, it can seriously impact performance. Most people think of outdoor allergens. However, some allergies may be food-related. A peanut allergy, as well as other food allergies, can be very dangerous for children. Once again, the best source of information about a specific child is his or her parents.
- **Obesity** – Unfortunately many children today are obese or close to it. We recommend that you do **not** push an over-weight child or generally out-of-shape child to prove some kind of point. Consult with the parents as to best way to work with their overweight or out-of-shape child.

Coaches, be on top of your game. As best you can, know the kids, their general health, absorb any input from their parents, and prepare accordingly. Your ability to consult with each parent about each child will help you develop the safest environment for everyone associated with your program.

Also, be sure to consult with your assistant coaches and make sure they share with you any health conditions that affect them. In turn, share any health conditions that may affect you.

**Remember, you are building a program!**

## Sample Letters to Parents

This letter represents a generic introduction from the coach to the parents in the event the families are new to the coach.

### Introduction letter

#### Current Date

Dear **Child Name** and Parents:

My name is **Head Coach Name**, and I will be coaching your **List Activity** team this year. I am very excited about the opportunity to work with each of you. My coaching philosophy is quite simple. First and foremost, I want each child to feel good about himself/herself. A strong self-esteem is vital to learning. Second, I want the kids to have fun!! Third, I want the kids to learn some **List Activity** concepts and improve on their individual skills.

My definition of winning might be different than most. I believe that "wins" come in various sizes and shapes, just like the kids themselves. A good throw-in in soccer, a good screen in basketball, a good set in volleyball, a good cut-off throw in baseball/softball, or a good pass of the baton in track are all considered "wins" in my book. My job as a coach, and I believe your job as a parent/supporter, is to recognize these various "wins" and provide the necessary feedback that reinforces the behavior that makes these "wins" possible. If we, as parents/coaches, focus on the individual "wins," the scoreboard will take care of itself.

As a parent, your willingness to have your child participate is a big commitment on your part, and I sincerely appreciate your efforts. Also, if there are any parents who wish to coach, please contact me. I welcome any and all help. Please get involved. I may be calling you!!

Enclosed you will find:

- An Items to Know sheet
- A roster with parent names
- A schedule and maps to the fields

**I also wish to host a Parent/Player Meeting for about 20 minutes before/after our first practice, which is scheduled for **Practice Date, Time, and Location**. Please have at least one parent attend this meeting.**

Thanks for allowing **Child Name** to play this season. If any of the above prompts any questions or clarifications, please contact me via the phone numbers or email address below.

Let's enjoy this season together!

**Coach Name**

**Primary Coach Phone Number**

**Alternate Coach Phone Number**

**Coach Email Address**

## Experienced Letter

This letter represents introduction communication from the coach to the parents when the coach has worked with the families for a number of years.

### Current Date

Girls Softball is Back!!!

Issue 1-1, Coach **Last Name** Press

**City, State** – The 5th Grade Girls coached by Coach **Last Name** and a host of parents is back and getting ready for the season! With an active off-season, the prospect of playing on dirt infields (as opposed to all-grass fields), the addition of new equipment bags to haul the “stuff” around, and a couple of new softballs, the team begins its rigorous spring training schedule. With the thought that this year’s team may even play on dirt infields, the training takes an early tough turn by practicing on the school’s asphalt!! When asked about this strategy, Coach **Last Name** said, “If it’s not green, we are practicing on it!”

Similar thoughts were conveyed by **Assistant Coach 1, Assistant Coach 2, Assistant Coach 3, and Assistant Coach 4**: “Bring on the asphalt, and don’t forget the chalk; we need bases you know”. Also reflecting on the year was **Child Name 1, Child Name 2, Child Name 3, and Child Name 4**, jointly saying: “We are in the **Xth** grade. Our time has come.” When asked about their statement, the players weren’t sure what it meant, but said it sounded good.

And finally, from **Child Name 1, Child Name 2, and Child Name 3** comes the following: “It doesn’t matter who they throw at us. Bring on your “heater.” We’re still going to “beat ‘em.”

Obviously, the enthusiasm is running high as the impending season grows near. Coach **Last Name** has a host of volunteers and says that any parent is welcome to participate at any time. Also relayed to this reporter was Coach **Last Name**’s basic philosophy:

- Let’s promote strong self-esteem, both on the field and at home.
- Let’s enjoy this experience with our kids; let’s have fun with these 10- and 11-year-olds.
- Let’s learn some softball and make every effort to better ourselves as players, coaches, and parents.
- And finally, let us, the parents, provide the example of good sportsmanship.

This season has all the makings of an exciting year. Coach **Last Name** hopes that the players and their parents enjoy this season. If at any time you need to contact Coach **Last Name**, do so via the information below.

Note: The following page shows our practices for the month of **Month Name** and batting cage times for the first month. Also included is an Items to Know sheet, a roster, a schedule, and maps to the fields.

Thanks for being such good families. It is an honor to coach your kids.

**Coach Name**

**Primary Coach Phone Number/Email Address**

**Alternate Coach Phone Number/Email Address**

## Items to Know

The Items to Know sheet allows you to share and set some basic expectations for the families. Key sections within the Items to Know sheet are:

### Schedule (practice and game)

- Practice Schedule – We practice **Dates and Start/End Times** at **Location**.
- Games – Games will be played at **Locations** (check schedules for game time and be-there time)
- Rain outs – You will receive a call from me or another parent between 5:15 & 5:30 p.m. No need to call me – **just show up unless you hear from me or another parent.** (You may want to add an email address here or inform them about a group email procedure for rainouts, changes, etc.)

### Equipment

- All kids need **List Equipment**
- **List Shoe Rules (plastic spikes, no metal spikes, for example)**
- Bring water to all practices and games
- Our uniform consists of **List Uniform Shirt Color, Pants Color, Socks Color, etc.**
- Our team’s uniform coordinator is **Uniform Coordinator Name**

### Rules and policies

- As coach, I am responsible for the fans’ behavior – your cooperation is appreciated
- Please review the Code of Excellence and the Parent Participation Agreement

### Volunteers

We need a post-game goodies coordinator to provide drinks or a snack after each game. There is no need to spend much money on this. Just provide enough to cover the players and any small siblings. I will ask parents about possible food allergies.

### Miscellaneous announcements

Please bring a check for **\$ amount** made out to **Organization Name** as a uniform deposit.



## Team Roster Format

Coaches, it's extremely important for you to have a team roster. It is in your best interest to receive approval from each family prior to distributing roster information. Your team roster should include:

- Header Information
  - Title – Team Roster
  - Activity – specific sport or activity
  - Grade
  - Year
- Head Coach Information
  - Head Coach name
  - Head Coach primary phone number
  - Head Coach alternate phone number
  - Head Coach email address
- Assistant Coach Information
  - Assistant Coach name
  - Assistant Coach primary phone number
  - Assistant Coach alternate phone number
  - Assistant Coach email address
- Child Information
  - Child name
  - Child phone number
  - Child email address
- Parent Information
  - Parent name(s)
  - Parent address(s)
  - Parent phone number(s)
  - Parent email address(es)
  - Parent alternate email address(es)

Coaches, a template of this roster is available for your use via the CCE (Coaches Continuing Education) area of this website once you have completed the training program.

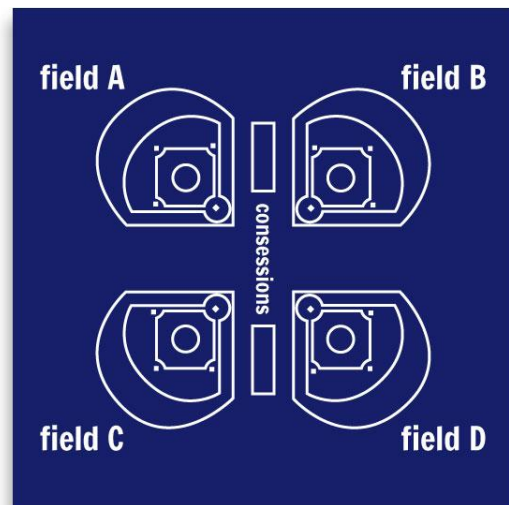
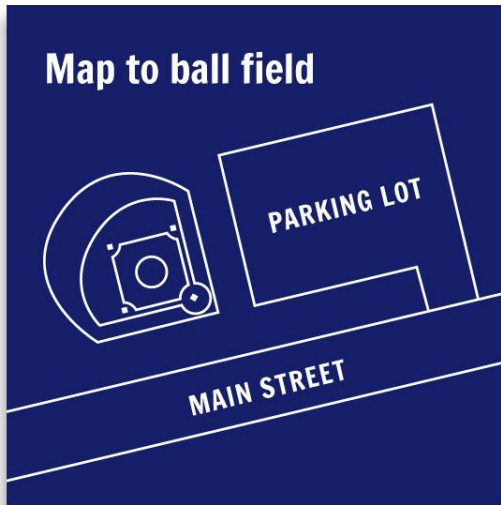
## **Team Schedule Format**

Coaches, a team schedule should include the following information:

- Header Information
  - Title – Team Schedule
  - Activity – Specific sport or activity
  - Grade
  - Year
- Head Coach Information
  - Head Coach name
  - Head Coach primary phone number
  - Head Coach alternate phone number
  - Head Coach email address
- Assistant Coach Information
  - Assistant Coach name
  - Assistant Coach primary phone number
  - Assistant Coach alternate phone number
  - Assistant Coach email address
- Activity Information
  - Day of week
  - Activity date
  - Opponent
  - Address
  - Location
  - Start time
  - Be-there time
  - Practice/Game

Coaches, a template of this roster is available for your use via the CCE (Coaches Continuing Education) area of this website once you have completed the training program.

## Maps



Most gymnasiums have a specific street address and ZIP code. Assuming parents are given this information from you, they can easily look up directions online.

Frequently used playing fields are known by most families, and they will know how to get there without the use of a map.

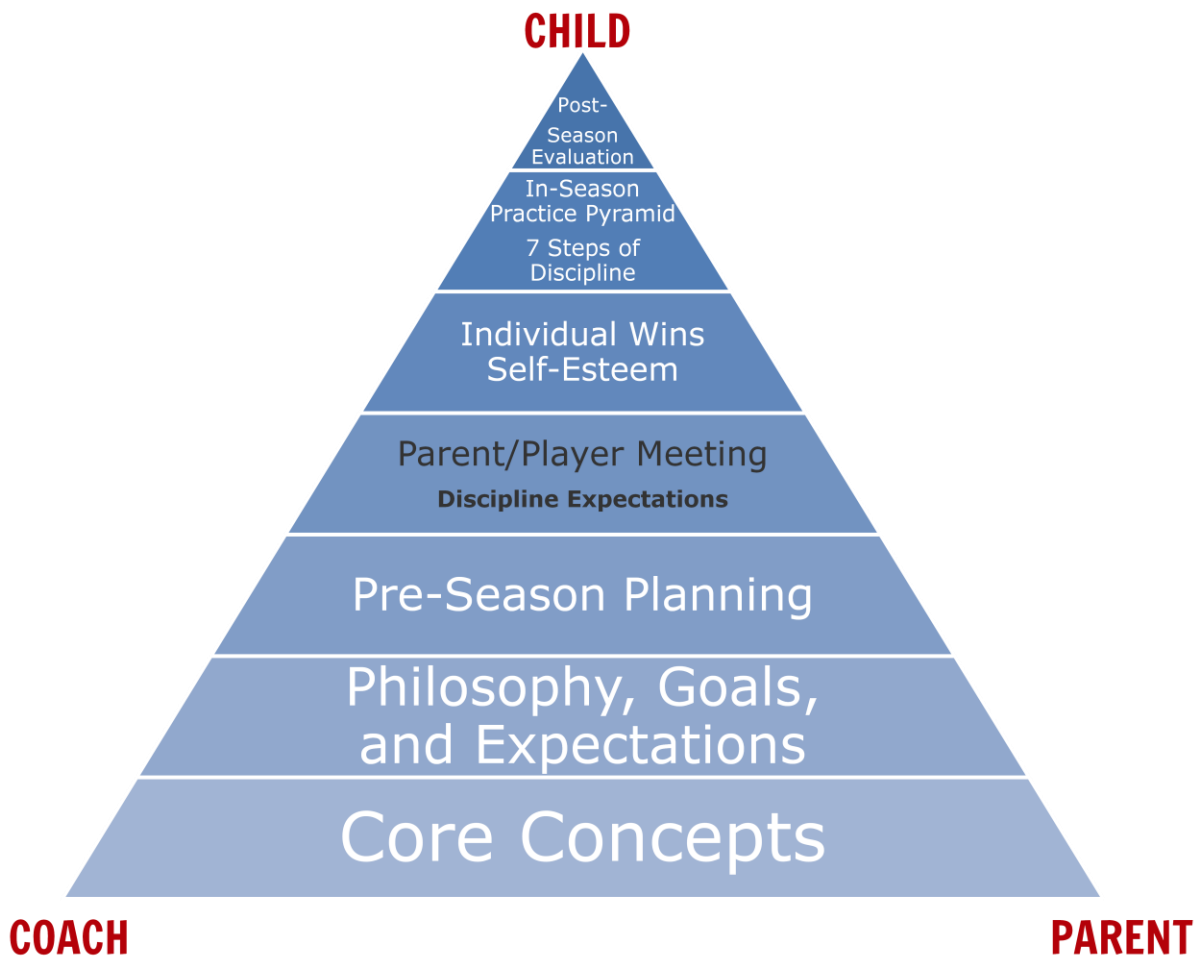
However, some fields are difficult for anyone to find easily and will not have a specific street address and ZIP code. Help the families by providing maps of out-of-the-way fields. It will be appreciated and save you time in the long run. It is a small thing, but it is yet another way to help build an effective program.



## Chapter 4

### Parent/Player Meeting

### Coaching Coaches Pyramid - Parent /Player Meeting



## **Parent/Player Meeting**

It is highly recommended that every coach prepare for and conduct a Parent/Player Meeting prior to the start of every season. The below agenda will assist in developing an effective meeting for both parents and kids.

### **Parent/Player Meeting agenda**

#### **Introductions**

- Head coach and assistant coaches
- Qualifications and background
- Talk about why you went into coaching

#### **Coaching philosophy, goals, and expectations**

- Coaching philosophy
- The role of winning and having fun
- Code of Excellence
- Parent Participation Agreement

#### **Program specifics**

- Items to Know
- Roster
- Schedules
- Maps
- Questions and answers
- Post-Season Evaluation – available for all families

#### **Fan behavior**

- Sideline behavior – before, during, and after the games and practices
- Parents, grandparents, siblings, other family members, and friends a family member may bring
- As the head coach, you are responsible for everyone's behavior

#### **Other organizational announcements**

- Organizational expectations, e.g., uniform deposits, concession stand work hours

## **Code of Excellence Introduction**

The objective of the Code of Excellence is to share with the parent and kids the standards by which this program (team) is going to operate. These standards directly affect the coach, the parents, and the kids. By using this document, a coach can quickly and easily share foundational expectations for everyone.

The key to this document is the inclusion of the coach. The coach is not sitting in an ivory tower simply dictating what everyone else should be doing. This document holds all three groups (coach, parents, and child) accountable to a set of standards.

The Code of Excellence is a two-sided, single-page document. The front side of the document lists the rights and responsibilities of the coach, parents, and child. The front side can be populated in any way to fit the needs of the coach's program. The back side of the document contains room for parent and child notes, as well as the parent policies. In the parent and child notes sections, a parent and/or child can share any additional information that they may not have wanted to share at a public meeting or even face-to-face with the coach.

The more information a coach can gather about a family and child, the more prepared he or she will be to provide the best possible sporting experience for everyone involved.

At the Parent/Player Meeting, each family will receive two copies of the Code of Excellence. The parent(s) will take both copies home and discuss the code with the child. One copy will be signed by the child and parent(s) and returned to the coach. The second copy will be kept by the family for future reference and family discussion.

Coach, take this form seriously. It will not only help you set specific expectations, it will help define your program for the kids, the families, your coaching staff your organization, and yourself.

## Code of Excellence

### Code of excellence front side

	<b>Sportsmanship</b>	<b>Respect</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Coach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize and encourage efforts regardless of results.</li> <li>Provide opportunities for all athletes regardless of ability.</li> <li>Promote vigorous competition while treating opponents as "friends at play."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acknowledge and respect anyone associated with the program (model the Golden Rule)</li> <li>Model dignity, poise, and composure in dealings with parents, kids, coaches, and officials.</li> <li>Promote harmonious relationships through a desire to understand respectful communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a safe, fun environment that promotes growth and self-esteem.</li> <li>Communicate with parents, kids, and officials in a timely manner.</li> <li>Know the rules and policies of the sport.</li> <li>Meet and maintain appropriate standards of coaching excellence.</li> </ul>
<b>Parent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide positive encouragement at games and practices.</li> <li>Model sportsmanlike conduct toward other parents, spectators, kids, coaches, and officials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model respect for authority both on and off the field, especially during practices and games.</li> <li>Make good-faith efforts to honor timely participation in games and at practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adhere to rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of governing organizations, especially the Parent Participation Agreement.</li> <li>Support and participate in appropriate discipline of your child.</li> <li>Proactively help out in whatever way you can, e.g., being on time for the start and end of practices and games.</li> </ul>
<b>Youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have fun.</li> <li>Play hard.</li> <li>Play fair.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow the Golden Rule.</li> <li>Show respect for parents, coaches, teammates, officials, and especially opponents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show up at all practices and games (on time), unless the coach has been notified.</li> <li>Cooperate.</li> </ul>

Coach

Date

Parent

Date

Youth

Date

Parent

Date





**Code of Excellence back side**

**Code of Excellence parent policies**

- If you speak from the sidelines, it has to be positive
- No coaching from the sidelines
- Make practices and games “quality time” for your families

**Questions, comments, and concerns for the coach**

Parents, please use this section to share any additional information that you deem necessary with the coach.

Parent Notes:

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Youth Notes:

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## **Parent Participation Agreement**

The Parent Participation Agreement is designed to help promote effective communication between the coach and the families. Here are some examples and guidelines for two different forms of communication.

### **How to communicate with the coach**

Parents, please use this as a guideline when you need to communicate with your coach.

#### **Informational or simple communication examples**

- We are going on vacation
- Jill had a 102° fever today
- We will be late next week because ...

Coaches welcome this form of communication early and often. The more parents communicate with coaches, the better.

However, if the communication is sensitive in nature or possibly emotional, please follow the below guidelines:

#### **Sensitive or emotional communication guidelines**

- Exercise good judgment and restraint when offering input that **may** be considered critical or sensitive in nature. In other words, **think about it** (coach will do the same).
- If you feel it is **necessary** to offer your input, please wait 24 hours after the game, practice, or event that triggered your concern.
- All **potentially** critical or sensitive communications must take place at a time and location other than during practice, at a game, in front of other people, or in front of one's own child or another child.

## Discipline



Parents have the primary responsibility for disciplining their children. The program has a three-step process in dealing with children who need corrective input about their behavior.

1. Give a simple warning that focuses on the child's behavior.
2. We may give them a second warning before a time-out or go straight to a brief time-out.
3. If the behavior persists, you will be contacted and asked to participate in appropriate steps to correct your child's behavior.

## 7 Steps to Discipline

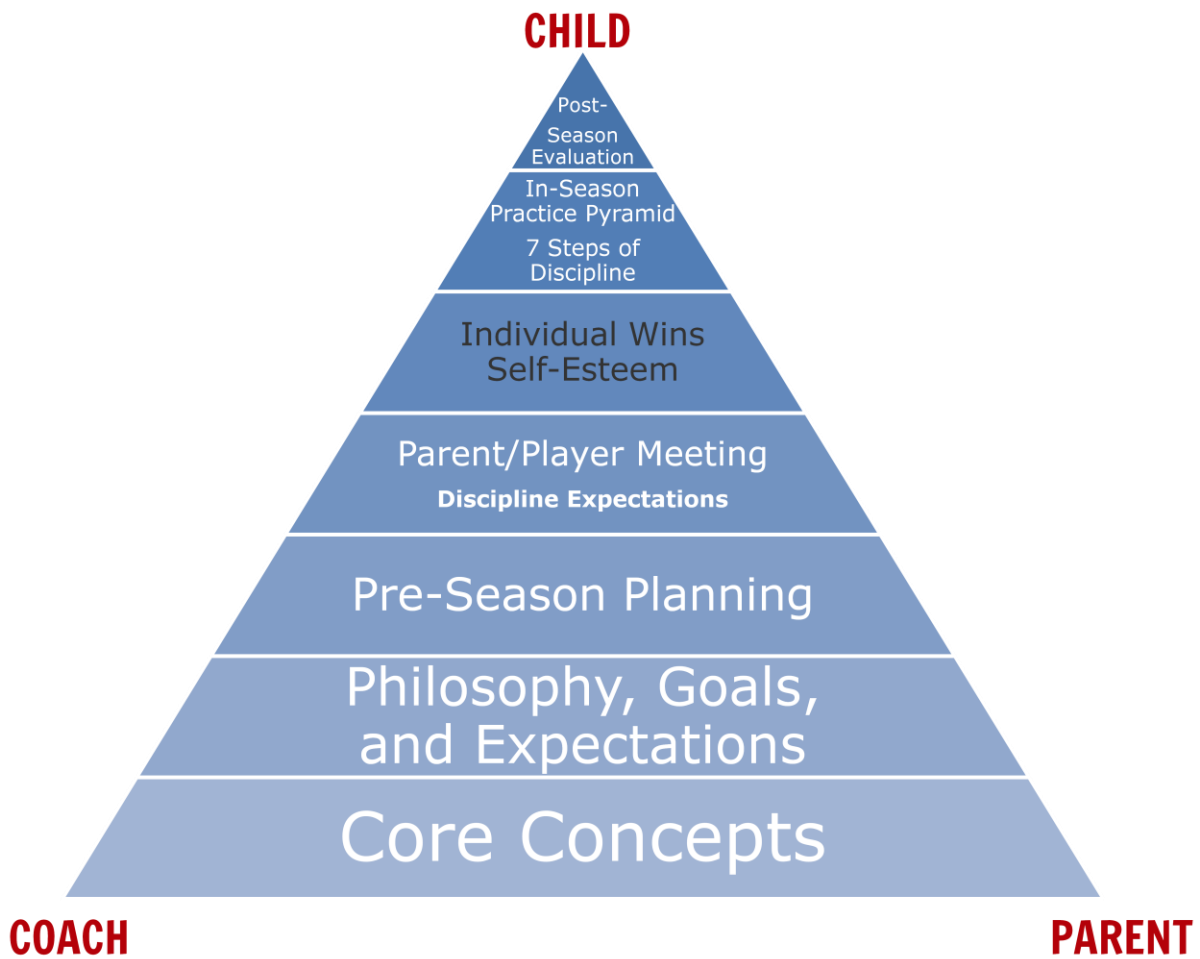
1. The more you are organized, in all phases of your coaching, the fewer problems you will have.
2. Develop a philosophy of behavior that you expect; then communicate it clearly and often to both the kids and their parents.
3. **Prepare yourself** to handle discipline problems in a low-key manner and institute a matter-of-fact approach. Remember, most discipline problems are the result of a particular child not getting enough attention either from you or his or her peers.
4. Once a low-key warning has been given to a particular child or group of kids and the child or group continues to act up, a simple time-out away from all the other kids is appropriate (approximately 5 minutes). **Make sure to keep the kids in your sight if this action is taken.**
  - It can also be very effective to address the inappropriate behavior in a one-on-one setting, with another coach in attendance so you are not considered "alone" with the child.
5. If a particular child (or group of kids) demonstrates an ongoing discipline problem, you have attempted to discipline the child with time-outs, you have talked to the child one-on-one, and you still see no improvement, get the parents involved **immediately**. Solicit the parents' help and form an alliance with the parents to resolve the issue.
6. If you do not get the appropriate support from the parents, you may have no choice but to seek the director of your sport and/or the board of your organization for help. You cannot be an effective coach if you are constantly battling discipline problems. **It just won't work!**
7. Remember steps No. 1 and No. 2 – the more you are organized in all phases of your coaching, the fewer problems you will have.
  - Work hard to avoid sarcasm. The younger kids don't understand your "shot," and the older kids become embarrassed and will build walls that may never come down.



## Chapter 5

### Individual Wins

**Coaching Coaches Pyramid - Individual Wins and Self-Esteem**



## Individual Wins - What Are They?

- There are many individual wins, by all players, taking place on every play of every game and practice, even if kids are **not** directly involved in the play.
- Our job is to take our attention off the scoreboard (or the result of the play) and put it on the individual wins. There are far more individual wins taking place than there are points on the scoreboard. Coaches, if you concentrate more on the individual wins, the scoreboard will take care of itself.
- Individual wins happen when we help kids think about their successes and failures in ways that build self-esteem.
- Focusing on individual wins is a very **proactive** approach to coaching as opposed to **reactive** or results-oriented coaching.
- Parents concern themselves with **results**; coaches must concern themselves with **process**.
- Don't let the scoreboard become the only barometer of your efforts and the kids' efforts. Yes, winning is more fun than losing. However, if winning is your **only** goal or your primary goal, then I suggest you reconsider coaching our kids. Move to the high school varsity level or the college level or the professional level. At the grade school level and early high school level, I believe our goal is about development of all the kids, sharing the passion of the game, age appropriately instructing the fundamentals, and making this activity such a positive experience that these kids keep coming out to youth sports year after year. Regardless of your win-loss record, I believe individual wins can drive your program.

## Two Steps to Coaching Individual Wins



1. **Recognize and reinforce successes** – Successes are taking place all over the field or court, even if the child is **not** directly involved in the play. **Notice** when he or she might be disappointed
2. **Give the right kind of feedback** – The time you choose to give your feedback is as critical as the feedback itself. Give thought to your timing, as each kid will require a slightly different approach based on his or her personality
  - Empathize. Show them you understand how they might feel.
  - Tell the truth (with charity). Let them have their own experience, including disappointment.
  - Help them explain disappointments and failures realistically.

Thirty years of research prove that it is not just successes and failures that affect a child's self-esteem, but also **how they think** about their successes and failures.

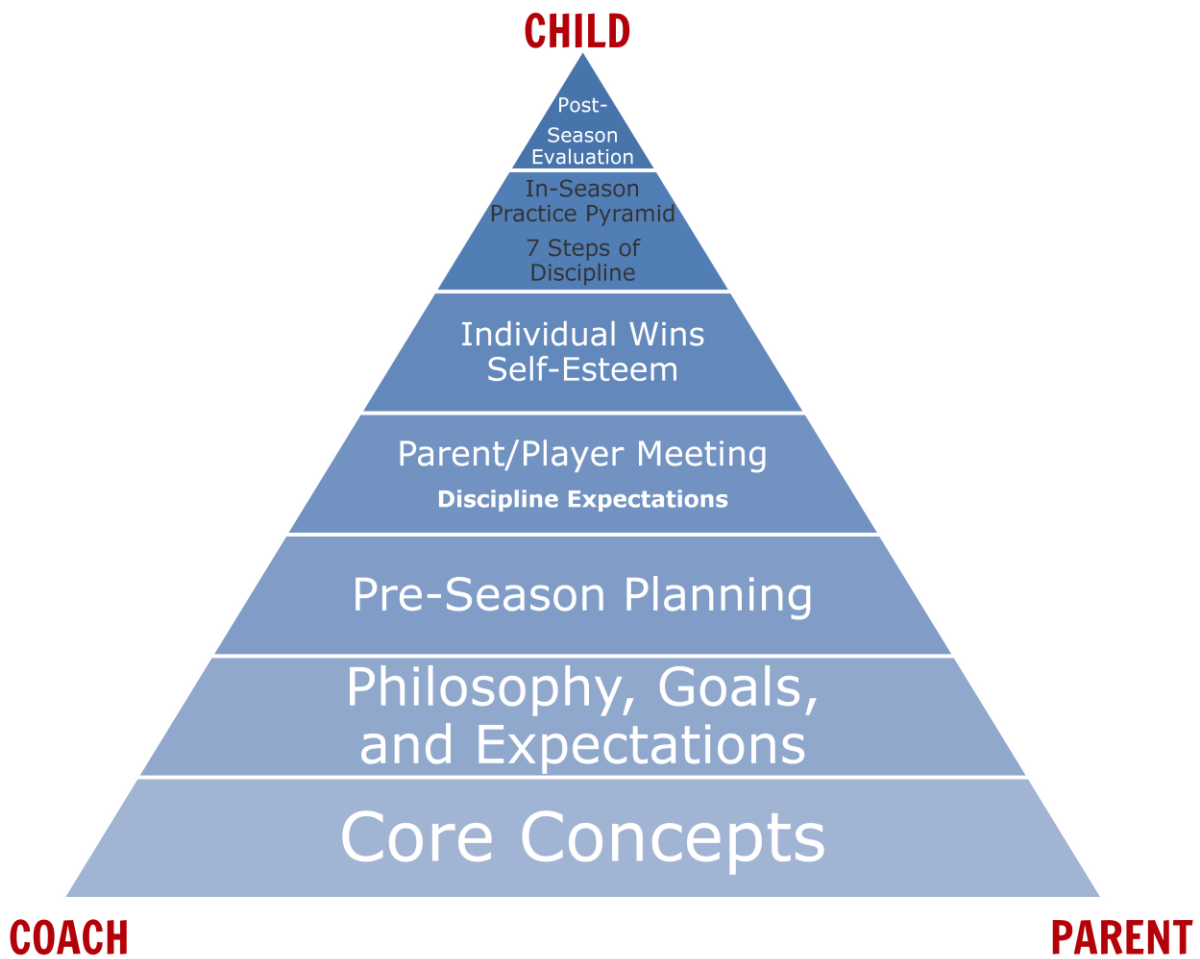




## Chapter 6

### In-Season Checklist, Practice Pyramid, and Discipline

**Coaching Coaches Pyramid - In-Season Checklist, Practice Pyramid and Discipline**



## Coaches In-Season Checklist

This document is designed to be used during the season to keep you on task and remind you of your coaching responsibilities.

- Have your coach's binder, first-aid kit, ice, and plastic bags that lock at all practices and games.
- Prepare for all your practices and games using the Practice Pyramid, your stated philosophies, goals, and expectations. Be prepared **tactically and emotionally** every time you step onto the field or court
- Adjust the length of all the sections based on the age of the kids that you are coaching
- Continue to seek effective drills, via books, Internet, DVDs or clinics, which you think will be effective for your team, keeping in mind your players' ages and abilities
- Continue to seek knowledge of what to expect from your kids with regard to physical and mental capabilities. As a generalization, we would all hope to coach the "best" kids, but most coaches will be coaching a wide variety of skill levels.
- Stay with the kids after practices and games to make sure they have all been picked up safely. Ask your parents **not** to drop off their kids and leave until a coach has shown up. **No matter the situation, never leave kids of any age by themselves.** This is probably your greatest responsibility to the children and their families. Finally, avoid being left one-on-one with a child waiting for a parent. Insist that another coach wait with you or ask the second-to-last pick-up to wait with you and that child until his or her parent arrives.
- Have your **actions** constantly communicate your philosophies, goals, and expectations throughout the season. After all the letters go out your **actions** will dictate your **real** philosophies, goals, and expectations
- Continue to communicate throughout the season. This kind of effort reinforces your commitment to each family. Please don't let this slide.
- Continue to review your rulebook.
- Continue to keep your coach's binder up to date.
- **Have fun. Enjoy the experience. You are organized and effective. Nice job, coach!!**

## The Practice Pyramid



## Explanation of the Practice Pyramid

The Practice Pyramid is designed to give the coach a skeletal view of an organized practice. The objective is to keep the practice organized, focused, and **fun**, and provide the highest return of productivity for the shortest amount of time. Don't forget to incorporate breaks into your practice and adjust all the times based on the age group you are coaching.

### Explanation of the Practice Pyramid

- **A beginning and an end** – There is always a beginning and an end. This technique adds structure and continuity to practices. A short prayer is recommended before each practice.
- **The warm-up** – The warm-up tells the kids that practice has begun and emphasizes that all kids should get into the habit of warming up and stretching prior to a strenuous activity. (8 to 10 minutes.)
- **Small group drills** – This section is designed for the kids to work on their individual skills. Try to have 3 or 4 drill stations prepared, and rotate the kids throughout the drills in approximately 5-to-6-minute increments. This will keep the kids busy and focused working on their individual skills. Keep the drills age-appropriate for your players' skill level. (16 to 20 minutes total.)
- **The teaching section** – This is the time in practice where you want to discuss one, two, or three teaching points. This could be new material or observations from the previous game or practice. Be very prepared for this section and try to keep it concise and to the point. (10 to 15 minutes; less for younger kids.)
- **Scrimmage** – This is the section where you allow the kids to scrimmage. Try to make it as competitive, game-like, and fun as possible. When it is all said and done, the kids don't want to practice drills for the entire time, and they don't want to be taught (spoken to) all practice. **They want to play.** As a volunteer coach, remember **why** these kids signed up in the first place. They want to have **fun** and **play** the sport. (20 minutes.)
- **Fun activity** – Your practice is now coming to an end, and you want to end with another **fun** activity, but always teaching. You are leaving the kids on a high note. You are leaving the kids wanting more. (5 to 7 minutes.)
- **The end** – The end is made up of announcements. This is where you praise a good practice, take care of any administrative needs, make any announcements distribute any handouts, etc. Remember, have a beginning and an end. This establishes a flow and continuity to your practices.

Note: Adjust the length of all the sections based on the age of the kids that you are coaching.

**Reminder: As a coach, do not leave the field or court until all kids have been picked up safely!!**

## Revisiting the 7 Steps to Discipline

1. The more you are organized, in all phases of your coaching, the fewer problems you will have.
2. Develop a philosophy of behavior that you expect; then communicate it clearly and often to both the kids and their parents.
3. **Prepare yourself** to handle discipline problems in a low-key manner and institute a matter-of-fact approach. Remember, most discipline problems are the result of a particular child not getting enough attention either from you or his or her peers.
4. Once a low-key warning has been given to a particular child or group of kids and the child or group continues to act up, a simple time-out away from all the other kids is appropriate (approximately 5 minutes). **Make sure to keep the kids in your sight if this action is taken.**
  - It can also be very effective to address the inappropriate behavior in a one-on-one setting, with another coach in attendance so you are not considered "alone" with the child.
5. If a particular child (or group of kids) demonstrates an ongoing discipline problem, you have attempted to discipline the child with time-outs, you have talked to the child one-on-one, and you still see no improvement, get the parents involved **immediately**. Solicit the parents' help and form an alliance with the parents to resolve the issue.
6. If you do not get the appropriate support from the parents, you may have no choice but to seek the director of your sport and/or the board of your organization for help. You cannot be an effective coach if you are constantly battling discipline problems. **It just won't work!**
7. Remember steps No. 1 and No. 2 – the more you are organized in all phases of your coaching, the fewer problems you will have.
  - Work hard to avoid sarcasm. The younger kids don't understand your "shot," and the older kids become embarrassed and will build walls that may never come down.

## Weather Conditions

There is no governing body to oversee the weather conditions for youth sports except for when lightning is in the area and a park ranger stops your play. Coaches, it is your responsibility to monitor extreme weather conditions for example:

### Heat

- Heat indexes at or above 90 degrees

### Cold

- Wind chills at or below 32 degrees

For many coaches, you reflect “back in the day” and say, “I was outside in those types of weather conditions and it didn’t hurt me” or something along those lines. It was always hotter and/or colder, and you are better for it. Personally, I hated the extreme weather conditions, and I am clearly not better for it. I have very sensitive toes from playing hockey in sub-zero weather for hours at a time. I never performed as well in extreme heat; I don’t think anyone does. It wears you down.

The point is simple: **Use good judgment.** You will not jeopardize a child’s college scholarship because you cancelled a practice or two when they were 5, 7, 9, 11, or 13 years old. The parents will love you, and the kids will appreciate the break. We run their sports back-to-back anyway, so an unexpected break will help their mental attitude toward you and your program, and you will clearly be doing what is in the best interest of the child.

If you do move forward with a practice or a game in extreme weather, make sure you are overly prepared for any situation. By not cancelling a practice or a game because of extreme weather, you have now put the kids, yourself, your staff, and your fans at some additional risk. Be mindful of these possibilities when making your decision. Below are some additional precautions:

### Extreme heat or cold precautions

- Allow for several water breaks
- Have water on demand
- Be conscious of heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke
- Be conscious of frostbite

Finally, **do not mess with lightning.** I have seen lightning hit in the vicinity of kids at play and it is scary! I tell people I am (or was) fairly fast, but I am clearly not that fast. Lightning kills. Use your best judgment when lightning is in the area!

**Thank you for taking this section very seriously. You are the governing body. It always comes down to your good common sense. Be smart and be kid safe!**

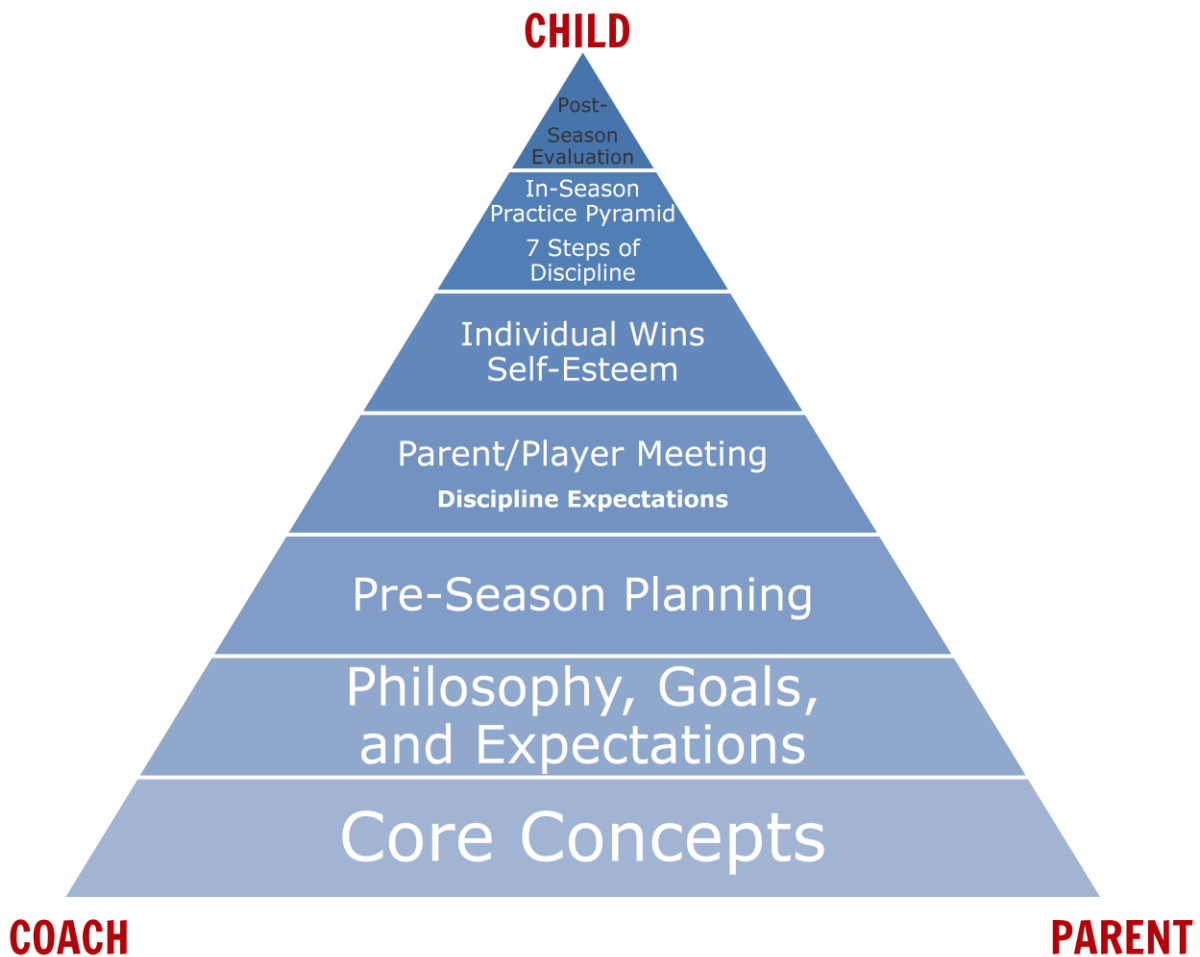


## Chapter 7

### Post-Season Evaluation



**Coaching Coaches Pyramid - Post-Season Evaluation**



## Coaches Post-Season Checklist

This checklist is designed to assist a coach in assessing his or her coaching performance. Any coach who goes through this process will be a better coach from year to year because he or she has taken the time to reflect on the season.

- **Congratulations!!** You finished the season!!
- Did you or your organization distribute an evaluation sheet to the families?
- Did the kids have **fun**?
- Did you see individual improvement?
- Did you have **fun**?
- Were you pleased with your philosophies, goals, and expectations? What changes will you make, if any? How did you do with regard to "individual wins"?
- Did you review the 7 Steps to Discipline, develop a plan for discipline, and communicate your plan to the kids and parents?
- Did you remind yourself, before each practice and game, that you are the adult helping to administer a child's game?
- Did you consistently prepare for your practices and games?
- Did you incorporate **fun** into your practices and games?
- How do you think you did with regard to yelling vs. teaching? As you review the roster, how many kids will probably sign up again next year? If you think that you have kids who will not sign up next year, ask yourself why?
  - At various ages, some kids discover that a given sport is not for them. However, there may be others who will not sign up again because of the experience – what about them?
- Did you host a Parent/Player Meeting?
- Did you effectively communicate, on a regular basis, with the families?
- Did you review your Pre-Season and In-Season Checklist?
- Did you keep your coach's binder updated all season long?

- Did you bring a first-aid kit, ice, and locking plastic bags to every practice and game? Did you seek out first-aid, CPR, and AED classes?
- **Officials** – How did you do working with the officials? Remember, our young officials are learning how to officiate and could use your understanding, your help, and your empathy. Please treat all officials with respect; in particular, please treat our young officials as if they were your children. **Thank you!!**
- Did you think at some point during the season you were:
  - An educator?
  - A psychologist?
  - Approachable?
  - A communicator?
  - Organized?
  - Setting a positive tone?
  - Coordinating several things at once?
  - Showing empathy?
  - Setting expectations?
  - Consistent?
  - Creative?
  - Showing concern by contacting a family after an injury
  - Having fun?
  - Making a **Positive Difference** in a child's life?

### **Volunteer Coach Summary**

Thanks for taking the time to evaluate your performance. Coaching is a **process** that continually evolves. Some days you and the kids can't do anything wrong; other days you and the kids can't seem to do anything right! Work to rise above the discouragements and remind yourself that coaching is no different than teaching in a classroom. It takes time to be effective. It takes time to develop your own coaching style. It takes time to build a **program!** Be assured that the vast majority of the kids and parents truly appreciate your efforts.

Keep assessing your performance, and you will become the kind of coach that all kids and parents desire. You are well on your way to making a Positive Difference in a child's life!

**Great job, volunteer coach, and thank you!!**



## Chapter 8

### Suggested Strategies in Support of Child Safety

### **Suggested Strategies for Volunteer Coaches in Support of Child Safety**

- Age-appropriately, develop and implement a Buddy System for all teams. Use a minimum of two parents when implementing a Buddy System.
  - To and from restrooms
  - To and from concession stands
  - Going to a playground area prior to or after your practices or games
- During your Parent/Player Meeting explain how important each child's safety is to you, your assistants, and your program. Seek help from the parents from day one with this most important issue. Thank you!
- Make sure that **you** and **all** of your assistants fill out the proper paperwork for a background check. Demand this of yourself and your assistants, even if your organization does not make it mandatory.

**If your organization provides a Child Safety program, please require that program for yourself and your assistants. If possible, get parents to attend as well.**



## Chapter 9

### Final Thoughts

## **Post-Game Show/19th Hole/Wrap-Up Show**

Coaches, first of all, **thank you** for coaching our kids! Without you, we have no programs. With you being a little better educated, we have much better programs!

Whether you are beginning a new season or wrapping up a season, I hope this Coaches' Handbook and my presentation have been a huge help for you and your program. Coaching has been and always will be about *who we are and how we deliver our program*.

Very few volunteer coaches will ever see one of their players in a professional sports uniform. Some will see a few kids play at the college level and some will smile when they see some of their former athletes play at the high school level. As you are well aware, the number of kids playing organized sports beyond grade school falls off dramatically, and that can be attributed to many factors.

For a vast majority of the kids, you might be providing the only organized sporting experience of their childhood life. Volunteers, we ask a lot of you, and I am asking one more thing: Make every practice and every game the best hours of your players' week because of who you are and how you deliver your program. Someone told me once that most people will not remember every detail of an event or a speech or a situation, but they will always remember how you made them **feel!**

When it is all said and done, and as much as we all like to win, this level of coaching is about development. We want, for each child, to develop a passion for the sport we are coaching. We want to develop kids who love coming to practices and games. We want to develop a spirit of cooperation. We want to develop a group of parents who appreciate our goals. We want to develop an understanding of respect. We want to develop a program to which kids and parents beat a path because of **who we are and how we deliver our program**. If wins on the field follow, that is icing on the cake. As best you can, create an environment where all kids win regardless of what the scoreboard says.

That is not an easy request, which is why we continually say **thank you** for what you do for our kids. Feel good about your choice to coach.

**Coaching is about *who you are and how you deliver your program*.**



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