

5 Tips For Youth Football Coaches

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5 Life Lessons You Learn From Football

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Taken from About.com Football Whether you're a veteran in the coaching world, or just starting to coach your son's city league football team, here are some tips to help make the experience enjoyable for you and your future stars.

1. Keep it Fun Football is a game, it's not life. While there are wonderful [life lessons](#) to be learned from the game, we as coaches cannot be so caught up in pummeling our opponent that we forget this important principle. In youth football, you've been successful as a coach if you've made the game so fun that kids want to play it again next year. This may mean playing "Johnny Slow Shoes", while offering up a prayer that they don't run his way. Like you, I've always maintained that winning is more fun than losing, but winning is not the thing. Fun is the thing.

2. Teach the Fundamentals The best football players of today learned the fundamentals of the game many years ago. This is in our job description as a youth football coach. We cannot give our kids a 100 page playbook and expect them to memorize it in a 6 week season. Simplify. Teach. This game gets more complicated the older they get. Take the time now to focus on fundamentals, and teach them [how to make a good block](#), [how to catch the football](#), and [how to make a solid tackle](#). Set them up for success in their future football career by laying a solid foundation now.

3. Teach Good Sportsmanship We are privileged to have a role in the shaping of some young people, and we need to take that responsibility seriously. Our kids should be the ones breaking up the fights in school, not starting them. Our kids should be the ones leading by example with their grades, effort, and enthusiasm. And if we expect them to lead by example, it starts with us. This does not mean they have to gather up after every play and sing Kumbaya. We can encourage good sportsmanship and physical intensity at the same. I love to see players going as hard as they can between whistles, and after the play, helping each other up and going back to do it again.

4. Keep It Safe Football has always been a physical game, with many injuries, and injuries are a normal part of most sports. However, the reputation for football has gotten worse recently with the research and media buzz about concussions in football. Can't we, as a general body of good coaches, do our part now before we have mandates on training and safety audits on our practices? Do we really need to do "bull in the ring" drills with our 10 year olds? Again, our goals are to make sure they come back to play the game, have fun, and grow into good people. Some injuries are avoidable.

5. Build Lasting Relationships Many of us reference our youth or high school football coach when we talk about who has made a big impact on our life. See beyond the scoreboard. You've got parents, neighbors, aunts and uncles involved (for better or worse). You've got Johnny's little brother, who actually *is* fast and physical, and might play for your team someday, if Johnny has fun with it. To me, it's not just about the game of football, it's about relationships. The 6 team city league that you're a part of may not seem like much, but it's an opportunity. I ask my fellow coaches the same thing I've asked my players; What are you going to do with what you've been given?