



# Keys to Effective Coaching

## 1. Keep it fun!

- a. Make effort your main goal, not winning. Do things right, winning will take care of itself.
- b. Plan your practices, be organized, and do some research – it will keep practices structured and efficient. It also shows your players that you've put some thought into things and that you care.
- c. Keep things moving... don't do the same thing for too long. You can always come back to it at the next practice. Be efficient and have a purpose... the younger they are, the shorter the amount of time you should spend on a particular drill.
- d. Keep things competitive. Kids love to compete... get creative, but here are a few examples:
  - i. Races for base running
  - ii. Teams for BP
    1. Teams of three... points for line drives, ground balls, gappers, etc... 9 in the field vs. 3 at bat – keep rotating.
  - iii. Set goals for fundamental work (ex. correctly field a certain amount of ground balls in a row, or a certain amount of good throws in a row in warm ups or cut-off drills, etc...)

## 2. Keep talking to a minimum.

- a. If you talk longer than 30 seconds, you will begin to sound like the person on the microphone at a fast food drive through - they will tune you out.
- b. Try not to state the obvious... ex. "hit the ball", "make a good throw", "we need a strike" – none of these are teaching anything.

## 3. Build relationships.

- a. They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.
- b. Try not to belittle or talk down to them – treat them with respect and you'll get it back.
- c. Focus on their strengths (build them up), while finding ways to improve their weaknesses.
- d. Be consistent, fair – and let them know what your expectations are (team and individual).

## 4. Focus on the positives.

- a. Reinforce the right way...
  - i. Use this tool to reinforce a player that might not be doing what you need them to do regularly (Catch them doing it the right way, and reinforce it).
    1. "Nice job getting to the ready position. You were ready almost every single pitch last inning... nice job – if a ball comes your way, you'll be ready for it!"
- b. Correction sandwich...
  - i. "That was a nice swing... next time, let that outside pitch travel a little further, keep your hands inside the ball and you'll crush it up the middle or the other way... stick with it... it will happen."
- c. Acknowledge your athletes that are doing things the right way...
  - i. "I love the way that Jimmy hustles to first regardless of how well he hits the ball – that is how we do things on this team!"

## 5. Window vs. Mirror

- a. Look through the window when things are going well (give credit to others).
- b. Look at the mirror when times are tough (take ownership, don't deflect (blame) and don't make excuses. Figure out how to improve the team – prioritize and focus on a few things at a time).
  - i. Use this as a tool for yourself and your players. Effective leaders find a way to make the people around them perform at a higher level. It starts with building them up and being humble yourself. Worry about the things you can control – not the things you can't.