

Hello Soccer Coaches,

This article, *from Soccer America Communications*, is for our coaches who are working with our Young Athletes Program, but you just might find some of these tips help every level!

Enjoy - Jennifer Tresp (Training & Unified Sports Director)

11 Tips for Coaching the Little Ones



By Mike Voitalla

11 Tips for Coaching the Little Ones

1. If all you do is set up goals and have them play as much soccer as possible during that hour of practice -- you're doing a good job.
2. Familiarize yourself with the various age-appropriate games/exercises to facilitate individual skills -- but don't use ones that bore the kids. And if it takes more than a minute for 6-year-olds to comprehend the activity -- it's the wrong one. (In other words, plan your practice but be ready to improvise.)
3. No lines, no laps, no lectures.
4. Enjoy yourself! If for some reason you're grumpy, *act* like you're enjoying yourself. Kids pick up on body language and you'll get the best out of them if they sense you like being their coach.
5. Greet each player when they arrive in a way that lets them know you're happy to see them.
6. Always end practice on an upbeat, happy note. (Even if they drove you absolutely crazy).
7. See the game through the children's eyes. This will remind you that your main objective is helping them discover the joys of soccer. And not to expect a 6-year-old to play like a 16-year-old!
8. Do not yell instructions at them! Do not coach from the sidelines during games! This interferes severely in their learning process. It also makes you look rather silly -- an adult screaming at 6-year-olds while they're playing.
9. Sit down during games, instead of prowling the sidelines, which only creates tension that unnerves your players.
10. Always have a first-aid kit (including ice-packs) with you.
11. Keep plastic bags in your coaching bag in case you need to pick up dog poo.