

THE OTHER SIDE OF COACHING

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We often assume that kids who play sports will develop good character and good citizenship. Although these are real possibilities, they are not embedded in any sport. They are however, inherent in the quality of the culture that surrounds the athlete's sports experience.

Coaches who only focus on developing sport skills and game strategy at the exclusion of the team's culture and player behavior, ultimately reduce the likelihood of success and more importantly, risk denying their athletes the benefits that can come from a positive and respectful sports experience.

The fact that athletes learn faster and perform at higher levels when they have positive feelings about themselves, teammates and their coaches should be a motivating factor for all coaches.

To create a fertile environment for a positive outcome for these real possibilities to occur, player behavior is not something that you only address at the beginning of your sports season or in response to a problem.

Respectful and civil behavior must be embedded into everything that you teach your athletes, constantly referenced, reinforced and revisited on a regular basis by the entire coaching staff as something that is important and valued.

Although the time your athletes spend with you may be limited, the language you use, the behavior you display and the behavior you tolerate versus the behavior you demand of them, will lay the foundation for many of the life lessons that they will carry into their adult lives.

In fact, we often find that coaches are second only to parents in having the most influence in guiding young athletes through the developmental process for building character.

This is the other side of coaching. Don't waste this opportunity.