

Essentials for Coaching Children

Coaching Tips 4

Great coach planning - for the season

Involving parents in sport

Parents of young and adolescent kids are usually very involved in their children's sporting activities; therefore, establishing good rapport and building relationships with parents are very important.

Here are a few ideas to encourage parents to work with you.

Before the season commences:

- send an introductory letter/email or hold a meeting (see Figure 2 on page 3 – also available on the ORS website)
- share your coaching philosophy
- engage parent help, get them involved
- inform parents of your expectations of them and their children
- exchange phone numbers/email addresses.

As the season progresses:

- be respectful, proactive and regular in your communication
- be available before and after competition/training
- respect parents' concern for their children
- praise their son/daughter's effort when appropriate
- thank parents when they assist and remain professional when they don't.

For some parents, 'winning' seems to be very important – some parents have trouble controlling their reactions. When parent 'input' becomes detrimental to the well-being of the child/ren, and to all that you are trying to achieve, action must be taken. Discuss with your school / club what the most appropriate response should be.



Coach's pre-season checklist

(see Figure 2 on page 3 – also available on the ORS website)

The Coach's Pre-Season Checklist has been devised to remind you of things to consider at the start of the season. You should recognise where differing responsibility lay between yourself as coach and the club or school. Add to this checklist or devise your own to ensure that you are well prepared for the season. Familiarise yourself with your club/school policies and guidelines.

Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.

Figure 1 – Introductory Letter/Email for Parents

Introductory Letter/Email for Parents	
Introduction	Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself • Express your enthusiasm for the season/sport • Share your hopes for their child for the season – e.g. enjoyment, development, new skills, etc. • Give an account of where you fit in with the school/club • Summarise your experience in the sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuality • Need to give notice of absence/injury/illness – how/when to inform you • Codes of behaviour for all • Using appropriate language • Treating teammates well • Respecting opposition and officials • Competition procedures – transport/warm-up time • Positive sideline barracking
Organisation	Policies/Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training venue • Meeting point – training/competition • Start/finish time – training/competition • The match schedule (if possible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation • equal competition time for all players • sharing of all positions • Illness/injury policy • Hot/wet weather policies – training and games • Use of social media
Requirements	Requests for Help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniforms • Costs • Equipment they will need/you provide • Medical information • Personal medication (puffers, etc.) • Safety equipment (mouth/shin guards, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant/reserve coaches • Team manager • Scorer • Social functions • Transport
Open Lines of Communication	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome parents to speak with you – before or after trainings and games • Share your contact details – email/mobiles • Ask for parents' contact details – email/mobiles 	

Figure 2 – Coach’s Pre-season Checklist

Coach’s Pre-Season Checklist	
Do you have the following people to assist you?	Have you considered the following?
<input type="checkbox"/> A back-up or assistant coach <input type="checkbox"/> A team manager or two <input type="checkbox"/> First aid assistance <input type="checkbox"/> An emergency coach	<input type="checkbox"/> Participant registration form with medical details – keep this with you at all times <input type="checkbox"/> Phone numbers – of players, parents, school/club officials, emergency numbers <input type="checkbox"/> The equipment that you need – gear, scoresheets, rules, safety items, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Easy access to the equipment – including keys <input type="checkbox"/> A copy of the program/schedule <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit
Have you provided the parents/ children with the following forms of communication?	Has the club/school provided you with the following information/policies?
<input type="checkbox"/> An introductory letter/email (see example for contents) <input type="checkbox"/> Codes of behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Your contact details <input type="checkbox"/> Match and practice times <input type="checkbox"/> Uniform/equipment requirements <input type="checkbox"/> Arrangements for late pick-ups from trainings and games <input type="checkbox"/> Social media use guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/> Any medical conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Participation – match time per player/ sharing of positions <input type="checkbox"/> Hot/wet weather – trainings and games <input type="checkbox"/> Transport to and from practice/games <input type="checkbox"/> Hats/sunscreen <input type="checkbox"/> Mouthguards/shin guards/protective gear <input type="checkbox"/> Grievance procedures for players/parents <input type="checkbox"/> Codes of behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> Risk management <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Disability access <input type="checkbox"/> Harassment-free sport <input type="checkbox"/> Accident/injury insurance cover for players <input type="checkbox"/> Accident/injury insurance cover for you <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory reporting (of suspected child abuse/neglect) <input type="checkbox"/> Communication/social media guidelines