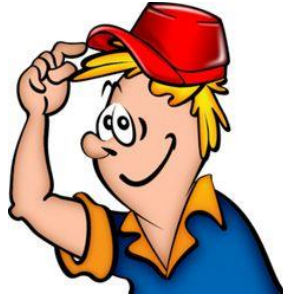


All Coaching Hats Must Be Worn Properly

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There are numerous reasons why you might be coaching soccer at the youth level. Hopefully it is because you love it and want to give back to the game. It may be because you were the last one to the parents' meeting. It doesn't matter. Thanks for accepting this important role.

The position as head coach of a youth soccer team means that you will need to wear numerous hats. The following is a list of hats that you may have already tried on but may need to adjust for a better fit. Too many coaches don't realize that they need to wear all these hats in their role as a head coach. There is a lot more to the position than just coaching.



Coaching Hat

As a coach you are tasked with creating an environment that is fun and offers your players development. The following is a list of some of the responsibilities that need to be covered by the Coaching Hat:

- Understanding of the game – Coaches need to educate themselves so that they can teach the game to their players. Just because you played the game does not mean that the coaching hat will automatically fit. Coaching education is a must for all coaches.
- Preparation – Coaches need to prepare trainings and actions for success. You are not doing your players a service by winging it. You should take time to prepare your practices so that they run efficiently and are effective.

- Development – This should be your main task as a coach. Too often winning gets in the way of development. Winning does not need to be overemphasized. Getting your players and teams to play to their potential is your goal. Wins will come.
- Patience – As a coach you need to develop patience in that it takes time for players and your team to grow. You cannot expect your 10 years olds to play like pros right away.
- Vision – You need to see where your players are at and know where you are trying to get them to.
- Understanding of who you are coaching – This may be as important as any in your jobs. Knowing who you are coaching and their tendencies at their age will make you job easier. Players are different physically, mentally, cognitively, and emotionally at different ages. Learning about child development will guide you in your decisions.



Safety Helmet

As a coach you are responsible for the safety of your players. Your hat will need to become a safety helmet. Below are obligations you must cover in your role:

- Weather
 - Excessive Heat – avoid training at the hottest time of the day
 - Hydration - make sure players drink
 - Cold – make sure players are dressed properly to meet the elements
 - Sunscreen
- Concussion education and awareness
- Workload – Know how much activity is too much, quality over quantity.
- Field and Goal Safety – Make sure you playing area is safe and goals are secured.
- Fair Play – Make sure players play hard but understand what is allowed and safe.
- Keep players in sight – Do not leave your players alone. Even a players trip to the restroom needs to be supervised.



Role Model/Mentor

A coach is a role model for his players and yes the parents. The following are some of the things a wise old owl would like you to consider in wearing the hat of a role model or mentor

- Comments – Players listen to every word that comes out of their coaches mouths believe it or not. You must be careful in what you say and how you say. The wrong words or delivery can be harmful. Be positive.
- Behavior - Lead by example. Soccer is an emotional game. Poor sideline behavior will be picked up by players and parents. Self-control will go for in demonstrating to your players that they need to control their emotions.



Band Leader

As the leader of the band you want to get all the band members on the same note. You want to get your parents and parents to make beautiful music. The following are tasks that you will need to address to make this happen.

- Get to know your players and create a rapport with them.
- Get to know your parents and create a rapport with them.
- Create open lines of communication with all.
- Explain your goals and philosophy.
- Explain expectations for everyone in the band.



Manager/Admin.

This hat falls under your responsibilities, but it is one in which you can seek help or delegate. Here are some of the things that you must consider.

- Communication – Use a team manager and or team apps to distribute information so that everyone know what is going on.
- Organization - Letting everyone involved knowing how all things are done.
- Equipment – Making sure that everything we need is available for trainings and games. That players look like a team and are dressed properly.
- Scheduling – Planning events that maximize participation and involvement.

In closing, you must wear a lot of different hats as a youth soccer coach. Make sure you look good in all of them. Thanks for your commitment to the game we love.