

TOP 10 TIPS

Coaching Young, Female Athletes By R. E. Martin

#1 Games Won, Games Lost... Memories Made, Memories Saved

Years later, dad will remember everything that happened in that fateful inning, quarter, or play; but daughters and wives will mostly remember teammates, friends and other parents. Don't assign male characteristics. Extend the gift of meaningful memories, not recollections of hard fought victories and/or blown calls.

#2 Talk Time is Girl Time — And Time Well Spent

Be sure to include in your practice time designated for team social interaction – it may not improve their skills, but, more importantly, team bonding will ensue.

#3 The Mood Pendulum Will Swing — Don't Permit it to Inflict Lasting Wounds

Group psychology feeds team chemistry at all times... don't kid yourself, you cannot tell your team how to feel... be patient and understanding and the rewards will be immense.

#4 We Cheer When We Feel It... Rah, Rah Somewhere Else

Some of the best female youth teams never do cheers, some do... let your team decide who and what they are... it is certainly okay to pump them up, but trying to inflate a balloon with a hole in it can be exasperating and deflating.

#5 Sacred Grounds Should Be Tread On Lightly

Some view "Daddy/Mommy Ball" as the bane of youth sports. Sorry, parental passion and love is really the beating heart and soul of youth sports. Don't deny or disavow parental involvement — embrace it, but don't permit it to become toxic either.

#6 They Look Sweet, But They Can Also Be Taught How to Compete

Kitten play is fun play, but it also involves learning and practicing future life skills... don't underestimate the heart of a young lioness ferociously protecting her sister pride... kittens can roar really loud, too!

#7 Tough Love... Remember Who You Are Thinking Of When Tending Your Garden

Coaches coach the way they were coached... and that's okay, but they aren't you. Some youngsters will blossom when pushed, others will wilt... remain vigilant for the emotionally vulnerable child. Competition isn't for every child... above all else, grow abundant self-esteem in your garden.

#8 Youthful Discipline Is Best Served With Candy Sprinkles On Top

Carrots/candies or sticks/foam paddle? Leave the shaming and belittlement somewhere else. Discipline should be dispensed combined with expressed respect. Have your coaches perform the punishment instead of the girls, if the kids/team outperform expectations. Sugarless gum and hard candies (mindful of braces). They don't have to be best, just be the best that they can be. Kids love to run — why use running to punish?

#9 Learning To Lose Isn't For Losers

In team practices, introduce many competitive games versus repetitive drills... the kids will learn skills at the same time they learn it requires focused effort to compete... and losing is simply a prelude to the next game & improvement... playing games involves applying lessons learned from previous losses and victories.

#10 Caring Sisters Transform Into Formidable Warrior Clans

The best teams play for each other... not themselves, not their coaches, not their parents, not their grandparents, but for each other. The image in the mirror should reflect confident independence & pride.