

# TOP 10 TIPS

## Coaching Youth Recreational Baseball By L. Lauvetz and R. E. Martin

### #1 If You Are On-Time, You Are Late

Be early and be prepared. You are the example — your team will play the way you coach. Be aware, in rec ball, working parents — with multiple kids going — pose scheduling and transportation challenges.

### #2 Polish All Of The Apples... And They'll All Shine

Do not cater to your best players. Coach all of your kids up and make them believe in themselves. Team get-togethers can contribute to a healthy crop of happy shiny apples and smiling parents too—trusted adult supervision is ALWAYS a must—remain wary of predators.

### #3 Moss Grows Under Stones — Dirt & Grass Should Fly From Under Spikes

Come on, Coach... gotta have lots of things happenin'! Standin' and watchin' other kids practicin' ain't accomplishin' diddly squat. Design drills that involve multiple players' skill development in small groups working at the same time — one by one ain't no fun!

### #4 Say, What? ...Oh, I Get It Now

Coach your style, but make sure you are clear in your expectations to players and parents. Put your players in a position to succeed—no matter their skill level. Everyone has a job and being the best at their job will help them develop, while contributing to the team's success. Repeat, repeat, then repeat again!

### #5 Cooler Heads MUST prevail... Stop the Sparks, or Douse the Flames

Put a lot of effort in laying out mutually agreed upon protocols prior to the season. Preseason preparation is preferable to intervention. A mutually pre-agreed to cool down period is recommended (from 2 to 24 hours). In the event that the passion of the moment overcomes protocol, listening & responding in a calm controlled manner helps. Overreacting in immediate response will often fuel the fire. DE-ESCALATE!

### #6 BE REAL! ... Cunning Conning Is An Anathema (really bad) In Youth Sports

Always be able to look your athletes in the eye and expect the same from them. Sincerity—or lack thereof—can build trust or be corrosive at any level of competition. Note: Some children find it very uncomfortable to maintain direct, physical eye contact with adults/authority figures. Their body language cues can often be misleading—they aren't adults, so they don't act like adults.

### #7 Holy Crap Competition

You volunteered... and are doing' the best you can. NO ONE LIKES TO LOSE... and you especially don't appreciate seein' yours & ours getting pounded into the ground. Yeah, they're better... A LOT BETTER! Here's the deal, coach, no apologies required. Your job is to nurture your players' self-esteem—stay on task!

### #8 A Bubbling, Boiling Tempest In The Teapot - Erh, Stands

Take care of your team parents, grandparents and invited guests - ideally, before they arrive. Request that game officials and/or the opposing coach deal with their attending crowd. Young recreation umpires may not be up to addressing crowd control.

### #9 It Takes A Village To Raise A Baseball Player...

...But not necessarily a village of instructors. Involve the parents if you can and they are willing. They can help run less demanding drills — and feel like they are needed. Just be sure to let them know not to instruct and to remain vigilant/safety conscious. Don't neglect moms—the best fielding catch of one season was a mom running full speed—with glove extended—flagging down a fly ball in the left center gap during batting practice!

### #10 Batting Practice - Goofin' Ain't Improvin'

Set up a contest where fielders are competing—use only two infielders and two outfielders; then allow them to play deep. If a ground ball gets through the infield, both infielders earn pushups (if they field it cleanly, they earn credits). If a fly ball drops in the outfield, both outfielders earn pushups (also if they fail to call it until it is caught or dropped and/or don't execute proper relay). If they handle fly balls properly, they earn credits. If a fielder performs an "ESPN"— then the coach does a pushup!