



ASSET-BUILDING IDEAS FOR COACHES



Being a coach is much more than teaching young people a sport. You have the opportunity to help young people develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how to resolve conflicts peacefully, communicate effectively, and to instill healthy lifestyle habits. Here are a few simple ways coaches can be asset builders:

- **Learn the names of all the players on your team and** call them by name. Make a point to talk to each player at least once every practice or game.
- **Create and maintain a positive atmosphere.** Two top reasons young people participate in sports are to have fun and to spend time with their friends. Winning is not one of their top reasons.
- **Focus on helping players get better, not be the best.** It will reduce players' fear of failure and give them permission to try new things and stretch their skills (asset #16: high expectations).
- **Know that highly competitive sports can often cause a great deal of stress for young people.** The intense pressure that goes along with trying to be the best can sometimes lead to unhealthy outcomes, such as substance abuse and/or eating disorders. Be careful not to push too hard and learn the warning signs of possible problems.
- **Care about your athletes' lives outside of the sport** and show them that they are valuable people as well as team members.
- **Set goals both for individuals and for the team.** Include young people in setting these goals.
- **Catch kids doing things right. Be quick to** praise a player's efforts. The best feedback is immediate and positive.
- **Use the sandwich method of correcting a player's mistake.** First praise, then constructively criticize, then praise again.
- **Adapt your teaching style and language to the players' age levels.** Young children do not always know sport terms. Use words and concepts they understand. Older youth may be more successful when they understand the big picture of what they are trying to accomplish as well as the specific skills or strategies needed.
- **Always preserve players' dignity.** Sarcasm does not work well with young people. They may not always remember what you say, but they always remember how you said it.
- **Insist all team members treat one another with respect.** Then model, monitor, and encourage respect. Have a zero tolerance policy for teasing that hurts someone's feelings.
- **Be specific about a code of conduct and expectations** for athletes, parents, spectators, and team personnel.