

Do's and Don'ts for Coaching Youth Baseball

By Bill Olson - Ultimate Baseball Academy (NE)

- Do set a good example – dress appropriately, no swearing, chewing, or smoking on the field.
- Do concentrate on fundamentals. Remember at this level you are laying the groundwork. I can't emphasize how important this is.
- Do attend at least one coaching clinic a year. Too many coaches' only background is that they were once players themselves. Not only is the game changing constantly, but coaches need instruction in handling athletic injuries as well as understanding the psychology of coaching.
- Do emphasize that your players get equipment that fits them properly. Too often gloves are too small or big. Baseball bats are often too long or too heavy.
- Do practice after the season starts. "In season" practices are very important to securing proper fundamentals and to constantly help teach the game.
- Do say something positive after every game/practice, regardless of the outcome. John Wooden has many great points in his book and one is the "sandwich theory." Two positives for every negative. Let's try for 5 to 1!! Remember no one ever tried to strikeout, make an error, or walk a batter.
- Do not quit on your team. Your main objective is to develop young players. Do not let your team quit.
- Do not be afraid of coaching your own children, especially if you have experience and professional training. However, be prepared to endure extra pressure which will be felt by you as well as your child. Coaches are hard to find and good ones are even scarcer.
- Do not be too critical of umpires. Remember both players and fans will pick up your reactions. You are "the example." Constant harassment of umpires injects extra pressure into the game and certainly does not teach anything about sportsmanship.
- Do not try to be one of the players. Remember your role, as a coach is to maintain discipline. Very few teams are successful without it.
- Do have fun, when you do, players will too, and this is what it is all about.
- Do not accept bad body language from your team or yourself.
- Do Respect the game; clean your dugout when the game is over.