



# softball

## Coaching Challenges

### COACHING YOUTH SPORTS PROVIDES MANY CHALLENGES

Children deserve equal playing time

If you were to ask children if they would rather play and be on a losing team, or sit on the bench for a winning team, the vast majority would say they would rather play.

In fact, if children aren't allowed to participate they're not going to have much fun, and they aren't likely to stay involved in the sport for very long, either.

Regardless of their age or the sport, every child wants to participate and feel that they're part of the team.

And that can only happen if the coach takes the time to make it happen.

Successful volunteer youth coaches aren't just judged by how many first place trophies they've got lining their mantel.

The truly good coaches are those that understand that wins and losses aren't as important as making sure each child is having a fun and rewarding experience while under their supervision.

And if children aren't playing they aren't having fun. And they're not waiting around long, either.

Studies reveal that boys participate in sports for just 3.17 years and girls just 2.46 years.

That doesn't leave much room, or time, for coaches to make a positive impact.

A sound coaching philosophy must revolve around meeting the needs of each child, not just of those children who run faster, throw harder or catch better.

Take a moment to reflect on your youth sports experiences. What do you remember? Is it the winning and the losing? Probably not. Rather, it's the activity, the involvement of being with your friends and playing.

They're called "forever memories" and whether they occurred on a baseball field or basketball gym, they're what you'll look back on for the rest of your life.

Children who are forced to sit on the bench while their friends play, often walk away from their sports experience with "forever memories" too.

Unfortunately, these are destructive memories that tear apart their confidence and self-esteem, and that's not what youth sports are all about.