



softball

Effective Communication

The most important skill you must have as a coach is the ability to communicate with your players. It is critical in carrying out your role as a leader, teacher, motivator, and organizer. Effective communication not only involves skill in sending messages, but also skill in interpreting the messages which come from your players and their parents.

1. Communication is more effective when coaches use the positive approach. The positive approach to communication involves having mutual trust, respect, confidence, and cooperation between you and your athletes. You can improve communication by:
 - a. Making sure you have the attention of your players
 - i. Make eye contact
 - ii. Avoid distractions
 - iii. Be enthusiastic
 - iv. Emphasize the importance of the message
 - b. Use simple and direct language
 - i. Reduce comments to specific information
 - c. Check with your athletes
 - i. Make sure the message is understood
 - ii. Ask questions
 - d. Be consistent
 - i. Make sure actions match your words
 - e. Use verbal and non verbal communication
 - i. Athletes will remember what they see and hear
2. Remember, you must be a good listener to be a good communicator. Being receptive to your players thoughts and comments is important to them and provides essential information to you. Good listening skills involve listening in the following ways:
 - a. Listen positively, not negatively
 - i. Use affirmative head nods
 - ii. One to three word comments, "I understand"
 - b. Listen objectively, do not be judgmental
 - i. Sincerely consider what the player is saying
 - ii. Being non judgmental will encourage players to talk
 - c. Listen with difference, not indifference