

Center for the Advancement of Responsible Youth Sport (CARYS) California State University, Fullerton

CARYS Mission

Serving primarily Orange County, CARYS has as its mission the promotion of positive and developmentally appropriate sport and physical activity programs for youth populations. The goals of CARYS are based on the understanding that parents, leaders, coaches, and professionals have a responsibility to provide a safe, enjoyable, and developmentally appropriate experience for children and adolescents involved in organized youth sports. The structure of leagues, the training of coaches, and the behavior of adults and spectators ought to be consistent with this responsibility. As such, the mission and goals of CARYS reflect the needs of a community increasingly reliant on sport and physical activity as an important educational tool for healthy children and adolescents.

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Motivating Kids to be Active!



A Lifetime Activity



Improves Endurance and Strength



Promotes Teamwork

Creative Coaching Techniques

By Gina Harmston, M.S.

The monotony of coaching everyday can get old, but finding a few creative ways to get kids more involved can increase practice productivity and physical activity levels. Most coaching techniques were learned from past coaches, but its time to start creating new techniques to enhance practice. A typical practice may include a warm-up, some participation activities or drills, the use of punishment or rewards (if necessary), and a cool-down. The following sections include a few creative ways to get the most out of each practice component.

Warm-Up

A great warm-up can get kids involved from the second practice starts. Doing The standard "Run a few laps

and stretch" routine can be boring, so spice things up. Some ways to do this are: with young kids, have them act like their favorite animal and run the laps acting and sounding like that animal. The louder they are, the better! With older kids, incorporate other types of "steps" or "runs" into their warm-up that are specific skills from practice. An example from soccer would be to run around cones for part of warm-up to incorporate the cut-backs they do during games. This will also warm up their knees and ankles for later drills. Creative warm-ups can increase enjoyment and practice participation. Just letting them use a soccer ball, football, or hockey stick on their own can let them naturally warm up on their own.

Participation

Increasing participation at practice can be tricky, particularly when specific skills need to be taught and there isn't enough help for all of the kids. A traditional, but not ideal, solution is to put the kids in a line and show the drill or skill one at a time. One way to get better participation, and decrease the standing around time, though, is assign the kids to stations. Make most of the stations things they already know how to do, but can improve on, or give them a partner to help correct each other. At one or two stations, have the kids practice the specific drill or skill to be learned. Then have the kids rotate every thirty seconds or minute. This frees up the coach from watching everyone at once and keeps

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Gina Harmston is a former competitive gymnast who has been coaching youth gymnastics for the last 10 years.



Creating Active Problem Solvers Through Effective Feedback

Jan Eichenauer

FACT OR FICTION? – Coaches should provide feedback often, explicitly, and immediately following the performed skill.

The purpose of providing feedback to athletes is to enhance performance, but how often, how specific, and when should it be given? It is evident that feedback stimulates efficient learning, allows for the proper progression of skills, and has an impact on the athlete's drive to continue practicing. In knowing these

positive attributes associated with feedback, the attitude of "more is better" is not necessarily the best approach coaches should embrace. While offering feedback following each practice attempt can benefit the immediate performance, it may not be advantageous to actually "learning" the skill. With as many as 20 athletes on a team, it would be virtually impossible to provide feedback for every child on every attempt. The point of this article is to empower the athlete to learn to self-adjust.

As a coach, you may find

yourself overloading your athletes with too many things to think about. Finding the appropriate balance between offering enough feedback for your athletes to enhance learning, while not providing it too frequently is one of the most challenging, yet most essential aspects of coaching. Effective coaches will encourage their athletes to actively take part in the problem-solving process. As a result, this will improve the "learning" of a skill. If a learner is constantly being fed the answer, he/she has less chance of understanding the

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Want More Information? Try the Following Books:

Catch Them Being Good (Tony DiCicco & Colleen Hacker, Penguin Publishing, 2002)

Coaching Kids for Dummies (Rick Wolff, IDG Books, 2000)

Book Review:

"Season of Life: A Football Star, a Boy, a Journey to Manhood"

By Jeffrey Marx

Publisher: Simon & Schuster

Review By: Lenny Wiersma, Co-Director, CARYS

"I would say that in order to make America a more just and fair society, I would boil it down to a single greatest crisis. If we don't address this issue, we really can't deal with the other issues. And that primary, critical issue is a concept of what it means to be a man." Joe Ehrmann

Youth sports turn out headlines. They turn out spectators. They turn out some great athletes. And, if Joe Ehrmann has anything to do with it, youth sports turn out men.

Ehrmann, a minister, social activist, and high school football coach in Baltimore, is a former All-Pro lineman for the Baltimore Colts. After years of playing in the National Football League and being exposed to what he refers to as the "three lies of masculinity," Ehrmann's mission is to teach adolescents that "being a man" ought not be defined by "athletic ability, sexual conquest, and economic success." The sports environment has been and continues to be a domain in which the development of masculinity is tied to social constructs about achievement, competition, and physical strength. We believe that as a result, it is just the domain that needs more coaches like Ehrmann.

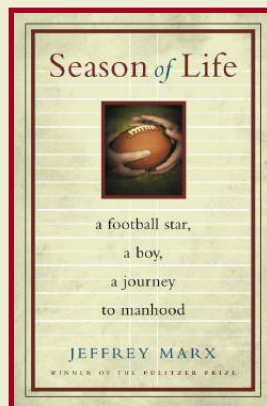
While the book is an account of the author's first-hand experience as a ball boy for the Colts when Ehrmann was a

player, then later reconnecting with him several decades later, Ehrmann's message is the most powerful aspect of the book.

Reminiscent of the "Muscular Christianity" movement in the early 1900s, led by ministers such as Amos Alonzo Stagg (long-time football coach at the University of Chicago) and James Naismith (inventor of Basketball), Ehrmann's impact on young people has probably been stronger on a sports field than from behind a pulpit. And his message is profound: being masculine is more about relationships than touchdowns, honor than ego, and teamwork than popularity. In a practice meeting with his team, for example, the coach told his players, "I expect greatness out of you. And the way we measure greatness is the impact you make on other

people's lives." As youth sports organizations are paying much more attention to the potential

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Creative Coaching (continued from p. 1)

the kids busy with drills they need to work on anyways. The best thing about stations is it gets the kids to be more active, which is one of the biggest benefits of having kids in sports...physical activity.

Punishment

Punishing a kid can be a hassle because it takes away from teaching time. Typically the quickest way to stop the inappropriate behavior is used, and that includes running or conditioning. While this can be effective in a few situations, generally kids learn nothing from it. Instead, make the "punishment fit the crime." One example would be, if a kid is not paying attention and has no idea what they should be doing every time the coach checks on them, make them show the drill or skill to the

coach to make sure they understand what is supposed to happen. Typically this increases the kid's discomfort level just enough for a kid to pay attention for the rest of practice. Punishment can be a great way to increase kids' awareness. Coaches just need to get creative with the way the punishment fits with the crime.

Rewards

Rewards are one of the best motivators for kids to increase their performance. Coaches want to make sure to give rewards that enhance self-motivation, rather than external motivation. Some ideas to give rewards that enhance self-motivation are: praise a kid when they do well and use them as an

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Book Review (continued from p. 2)



Joe Ehrmann

impact that coaches can have on the lives of their players, and on the opportunity to build positive character traits, this book is a wonderful example of how one person has made it his life's mission to cultivate a to made it his life's mission to cultivate healthy and positive environment through sports participation. CARYS salutes the work of coaches like Joe Ehrmann and encourages youth sport leaders to learn more about his work in *Season of Life*.

"If you look over your life at the end of it... the only thing that's really going to matter is the relationships that you had. It's gonna come down to this: What kind of father were you? What kind of husband were you? What kind of coach or teammate were you? What kind of friend were you?"

Creating Active Problem Solvers (continued from p. 2)

problem-solving process. Eventually, athletes will reach a point when they cannot always rely on their coach to give them the answer after every practice trial or performance. Encourage your athletes to actively engage in the problem-solving process so they can use their own intrinsic knowledge to guide their performance.

Consider, for instance, implementing a question and answer strategy in your feedback. For example, if you have a young player learning to throw a baseball at a target, such as a glove, and he/she demonstrates throwing inaccuracy, you can guide him/her to analyze where their hand position is on the follow-through. Ask the player, "In

what direction will the ball go when your hand points to the left on the follow-through? Where should your hand be pointing to throw the ball into the glove?" The player should then be able to conclude that the ball will go



in the direction their hand is pointing; therefore, he/she will learn they want their hand to point toward the target, or glove, to perform an accurate throw. This question and answer format will not only help your athletes take responsibility for evaluating their movement, but also require self-examination.

In the early stages of learning a skill, or when the complexity of the skill is greater, athletes may benefit from more frequent feedback. As the development of

the skill progresses, feedback may not be needed as often and can therefore be "faded out" to motivate learners to recognize and correct their own mistakes.

The take home message for coaches is that providing feedback on each attempt can lead to information overload, no matter what level you are coaching. In the long run, the most effective strategy to improve learning of a skill is to guide learners in becoming actively involved in the problem-solving process and reflect on their performance.

Editor's Note: The impetus of this article came from the *Journal of Sports Sciences* by A. Mark Williams & Nicola J. Hodges



Ways to get Your Junior Interested in Golf

By Eric Bean, Ph.D. Student, Michigan State University's Youth Sports Institute

Although the golf industry has seen a slight decrease in new players over the last few years, as compared to the late 1990's Tiger boom, junior golf is still a big business. More and more courses are opening and facilities aimed at offering affordable access to children are popping up all over the world. For example, in Southern California the Tiger Woods Foundation is building a new learning center in Anaheim that will include a 30,000-square-foot computer based learning center, and a 23-acre golf practice facility. (see the Tiger Woods Foundation website at www.twfound.org for more information). Given the increased access to golf and practice facilities, one may ask how to get their child interested in a game that one can play for the rest of one's life.

If your child doesn't approach you with an interest to play golf, one way to pique their interest is to discuss the qualities that golf embodies—such as challenge, honesty, etiquette, or whatever it is that you enjoy about golf—and that you would like to share those experiences with them. From there you might introduce them to the game slowly, by bringing them to the driving range with you and having them hit a couple of balls for fun or putt on the putting green for a little bit. It is important to associate the game with fun, so an option is to bring their friends along so they have fun while learning a little about golf. Don't spend too much time on technical instruction; just let them smack a few balls. Keep in mind that children learn by imitation and if they see you as not enjoying yourself, it is unlikely that they will develop an interest in golf. One side note is that it is important that the child has a

proper junior club and not an adult club that was cut down. Using an adult club that is too heavy can lead to bad habits and possibly strained muscles.

Another approach is to find a golf program that they will enjoy and that focuses fun rather than competition. You can find one in your area by asking a local PGA professional or going to www.Juniorlinks.com, which has a plethora of information on junior golf and junior golf programs in your area. Additionally, there are summer programs at local golf clubs which can be a week-long or summer long day camp. When I was a junior golfer I loved these because we did fun activities, learned about golf, and there was a lot of social interaction with other kids who were learning as well.

It is important to associate the game with fun!

As mentioned earlier, children learn by imitation, so watching a PGA or LPGA event in person or on TV may burgeon their interest and help with skill development. The large crowds and excitement of professional golf can be big attractors for children.

After their interest has strengthened and they have gone to the range with you a couple of times, a trip to the local par 3 course is an idea. It is important to go during off-peak hours where your child won't be under too much pressure from the crowds or pace of play. Ideally, we would want to the environment to be encouraging to development and, as always, fun.

Ultimately, the two most important factors in building an interest in and learning golf are access and encouragement. Golf courses are becoming more junior-friendly by adding junior tees and having better practice facilities. Hopefully, I have provided you with some ideas to help pique your child's interest in golf.



Creative Coaching (con't from p.3)

example for the group. Most kids like to show off when they do well. Before a child leaves practice, have them show their parent what they accomplished so that their parents can praise them with a full understanding of what they accomplished. This is important because many parents don't understand what a child learned from a story the child tells. If coaches take a minute to show them, the parents are much more appreciative of the coach and they understand their kid's enthusiasm. Rewards can increase participation and leave kids wanting to come back.

Cool Down

Cool down is a great time to allow kids tell you what they learned from practice. It can be time for feedback to see what the kids really learned. As the kids are doing a cool down stretch, also have them sit in a circle and discuss, "What did you learn today?" If most answers are about one drill or skill that was supposed to be the focus, the coach did his/her job well. If the answers are not about the focused skill, the drills may need to be revamped and tried again the next day. Cool down allows time to reconnect with the kids so asking simple questions will keep everyone up-to-date with where they are mentally after practice concludes.

Hopefully these techniques can help enhance practices to increase participation in a positive way. Daily practice can get monotonous, but the more creative the drills are, the more fun the coaches, and the kids, will have each day.



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CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:

<http://hdcs.fullerton.edu/knes/carys/home.htm>

Meet the CARYS Staff



Dr. Clay Sherman is an Associate Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at California State University Fullerton. He is the program advisor for the single-subject teaching credential program in Kinesiology and teaches coursework in pedagogy and sport psychology. Beginning in 1985, Dr. Sherman has worked

with children and youths of varied backgrounds. He was the head coach of an age group swim team for six years, a children's alpine ski instructor, and served as a caseworker/counselor for youth on probation.



Dr. Lenny Wiersma is an Associate Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at California State University, Fullerton, teaching courses in Community and Youth Sports, Research Methods, and Kinesiology. A former long distance collegiate swimmer, he has coached recreational, high school, and club

swimming for athletes aged 4-18, is a former director of a children's summer sports camp in the Bay Area, and has provided coaching certification for volunteer youth sport coaches in Northern California.



Dr. Cheryl Cooky is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at California State University, Fullerton, teaching undergraduate courses in "Sport, Games and Culture" and "Sport Sociology", and graduate courses in the "Advanced Study in Sociocultural Perspectives of Human Movement" and "Women in

Sport". As a young girl, Dr. Cooky participated in sports including gymnastics, volleyball, swimming, and softball. Once she hit adolescence she dropped out of sport, an unfortunately common trend among girls. Her experiences in youth sport inspire her current research interests.



Jan Eichenauer is a first year graduate student at California State University, Fullerton working toward a Master of Science in Kinesiology. As a youth, Jan participated in volleyball, basketball, track & field, tennis, and also enjoyed swimming and biking. She has taught middle school physical and health education and was a

Team Leader for the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP) for youth ages 10-16. Jan's coaching experience includes serving as an assistant coach for the Purdue Area Track Club, middle school girls' basketball, and also as an instructor for tennis intramurals.