

# Ten Tips for Coaching Girls' Sports

***Every coach a girl has will undoubtedly leave an impression on her. Here are some suggestions to get you on the road to creating a positive experience for blossoming athletes.***

**1. Encourage girls to get dirty:** Little girls can tackle, dive into headers, snag rebounds in traffic and be tough just like boys – if they are coached to. Give the girls you coach room to be as strong as they can be within the parameters set by the rules of the game.

**2. Set clear goals:** Individually and as a team, kids need focus for their energies. To facilitate progress, set clear, concise goals for every practice and game. Make sure goals are attainable and relevant to the skills and tactics your team needs to work on.

**3. Evaluate progress regularly:** Setting goals is only the first step. Evaluating strides each player made in a given direction is equally important to improvement. Girls need to know when they have achieved – so they remain engaged and enthusiastic. On the other hand, girls need to know when they have fallen short of their goals – so they can alter their effort or approach next time.

**4. Be mindful of social dynamics:** Sports don't exist in a social vacuum at any level. Crushes, cliques and power dynamics come to practice every day, like it or not. Observe your group and work to understand what social forces are affecting their progress. Exploit positive behaviors (leadership, support, honesty) and intervene to diffuse negative behaviors (bullying, isolation, caddiness).

**5. Take a process-oriented approach:** The athletic development of kids is slow to come when wins and losses are the success gauge of a season. Concentrate on how to shoot the ball rather than whether or not a goal is scored. Focus on fundamental skills, tactics and strategies over the obsessed-about victory.

**6. Respect each players' contribution:** Every player on your team has something to offer the group – whether it's a positive attitude, a fast 100-yard dash or a smart play. It's your job to find each girl's strength and encourage it to shine. Learn to highlight all contributions – physical, emotional and mental.

**7. Create expectations:** Before your season begins, let players know what expectations you have of them (timeliness, effort, equipment) and let them know what they can expect of you (feedback, support, communication). Create a predictable environment to support their learning.

**8. Set an example of sportsmanship:** Your treatment of officials, opponents and fans will undoubtedly be noted and mimicked – by both players and parents. Recognize your role and make a commitment to respecting the spirit of the game and all those involved.

**9. Help parents understand their supporting role:** Parental support is a key to a successful season. However, parental meddling in coaching details is a sure sign of trouble. Communicate your goals and expectations with parents – but demand autonomy in coaching practices and decisions.

**10. Focus on fun:** After all, that's what playing is all about, right?