

## **101 Things That High Schools Coaches Wish Youth Coaches Knew**

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### Goals

1. It is suppose to be fun for the coaches and the players
2. If the young man learns fundamentals of football, has fun, and plays football again, you have been successful.
3. If you accept a job as a coach, you are a role model. If you can not be a good one, don't take the job.
4. Be yourself; don't try to be your high school head coach, Vince Lombardi, or Bill Belichick.
5. Try to make a positive impression on every player that you coach. Some of them will remember things that you say the rest of their lives. So make it something worth remembering.
6. Teach players to love and respect for the game of football, it's traditions, and what makes it great
7. Teach responsibility. Never blame the refs, the size of the other team or anything out of your control for your losses.
8. Teach proper care and respect for the equipment. If a player learns at the youth level it is not okay to throw his helmet, it makes his coaches job easier down the road.
9. Focus on a few values or things you want to stand for. Make sure your players, coaches, and parents are aware of these and buy into them.
10. Be a professional, even if you are not paid. You're a coach, leader, and role model to the players, but not a friend.
11. Articulate your values – make them clear; put them on paper
12. Compare your values with your actions
13. Watch your team, or have outsider watch, at a time when going to be the most tested – see if the team's behavior and the values are aligned
14. Teach values to everyone (including parents) clearly, consistently, creatively, continually
15. Hold every player accountable to the same standards
16. Be willing to confront and change attitudes that are not acceptable

### Practice Planning

17. Have a practice plan, don't wing-it during practice
18. Make practice fun, yes there has to be some hard work, but if your players dread practice they will probably not play football for long
19. Reward players who practice. Get them popsicles, water melon, Gatorade etc. If you have a starter who misses practice, start the lesser talented players
20. Make sure you have footballs at practice.

21. Use your practice plan before practice to get everything for drills. Practice show be quick and moving get some conditioning in practice
22. Make sure you practice special teams
23. Practice blocking and tackling everyday
24. Plan for Water Breaks every 15-30 minutes.
25. Build up with blocking and tackling, don't go all out live the 1<sup>st</sup> day of pads.
26. You should have twice as much time devoted to individual skill work then to team scrimmaging. Even the NFL does this.
27. Find short quick warm-ups; if your warm up is taking over 10 minutes, then it is a waste of time.
28. Plan drills and activities that fit into the attention span of your players. If you are practicing for 3 hours and your players can't focus for that long, it is a coaching problem, not a player issue.
29. Make sure that every player finishes with a good rep. Try to finish practice with something fun.
30. Try to make things competitive as possible, but where everyone has a chance to win.
31. Practice in bad weather, if you have to play in it, should practice in it.
32. Monitor match-ups, if there is big difference in talent or ability, fix them. You best player will not get better going against the worst player every day in practice. Iron sharpens Iron.
33. Practice should be harder than the games.
34. Use conditioning that is specific to football. Who cares how fast your players can run a mile?
35. Nothing is too fundamental; John Wooden taught his players how to put their socks on and how to tie their shoes the first day of practice every year.
36. Leave the practice field in better shape than you found it, every day.

#### Staff Management

37. Lay out your expectations for assistants
38. Give your assistants real roles
39. Allow your assistants to coach.
40. Train your assistants
41. Lay out specific game day and season parameters for your assistants
42. Recruit good assistants and if you can't recruit good ones' make them. Coach them up so they can coach the players.
43. When an assistant shows you, you are wrong about something, or has a great idea, give him credit for it.
44. Have a dress code and try to get your staff team gear. If a coach insists on showing "individualism" by wearing his favorite t-shirt to practice that is from a favorite bar or strip joint get rid of him.
45. Do all that you can to promote and get recognition for your assistants.
46. Monitor your assistants and makes sure they are doing things the right way.
47. Make sure your assistants are coaches, leaders, and role models to the players, but not friends.

## Player Management

48. Football is a relationships game, learn players names, what they like and dislike, and about their families.
49. Start the season off with a meeting and outline your expectations for both players and parents.
50. One of the hardest and most rewarding experiences a coach can have is coaching his son. But the key is having a realistic expectation of your son. If your son is poor at all other sports he plays where you don't coach, but magically seems to be in the "premier" spots on your football team there is a problem. The big key is to let you son know that your love is not tied to his success in sports.
51. It is okay to talk about love and caring for players. Your job is to love them, and their job is to love each other.
52. Try to get your players to spend time together outside of the football team. Lunch together, etc. You want your team to be a family.
53. Medical professionals do not recommend losing weight to play a back position for youth football. Be very careful about this.
54. Don't swear, be a role model. Foul language doesn't "fire up" your team
55. Have a practice requirement rule and stick to it. What are you teaching if you play a "star" player even though he didn't meet your minimum practice requirement
56. Kids know if you follow the rules or if you cheat. Follow the rules!! What are you teaching if you "forget" about your minimum play standard in a close game
57. Teach the pursuit of excellence. No one ever achieves it, but the ones who chase it can become great.
58. Show respect to everyone, other coaches, teams, players, officials, parents, and teach it. Show and tell. People don't learn by just watching or listen, they by listening and having a good model to follow.
59. You are a role model. If you drink or smoke do not do it around the players.

## Game Coaching

60. Get 11 men on the field, not 10 or 12. Practice going on and off the field in practice so kids know what to expect and what to do.
61. Have a list of everything to take to the game. Camera, ice, ect. If you can get someone to video tape your game, it can be a great learning too.
62. Off-sides and delay of game penalties come back to poor coaching. You should not have more the 2 off-sides per game or 3 delays of game per season. Practice going on two or against a hard count. Practice at a fast tempo and teach your players what to look for to find out that time is running out.
63. Don't let one player beat you, kick away from him, spy him, double team him.
64. Develop a team mentality; a good Coach will take away your best player. If one player does over half of your scoring you have a problem
65. Fancy "inspirational" pre-game speeches do not win games, fundamentals do
66. Riding the refs is not going to get you better calls
67. Be passionate and enthusiastic, but not overly so. Teach your players the appropriate way to celebrate and how to lose with class.

68. You should never have a player, coach, or parent kicked out of a game. Ever!! You're the coach, control the situation, makes sure it doesn't escalate to that point.
69. Always take a ball to the game.
70. Practice special teams before the first game
71. Self scout your self. Are you to predictable?
72. Pay attention to the game or have one of your assistant coaches watching for predetermined keys.
73. At half time or sooner, make sure you know and have a plan to stop their best play, lineman, running back, and receiver.
74. Know if the opposing teams quarterback and play calling are left-handed, right-handed or balanced.
75. Is one side of the line better than the other? Know this for your team and your opponent.
76. If you get in the situation, do you have a 2pt play? A play to go 90 yards? Don't draw something up in the dirt.
77. A hail Mary play doesn't have to be a pass. You can do a triple reverse, multiple laterals, or something else.
78. Have a plan for dealing with bad weather. In Michigan it might rain, snow, and you can get extreme winds blowing in all directions. How will this effect your offense, defense and special teams?
79. Give credit for the win to the kids and take the blame for all of the losses. Coaching is taking kids where they can't take themselves.
80. Do not talk to a parent with a problem or react too hastily after a big loss. Give your self some time to cool down.
81. Do evaluate plays, players, game plans after a game. What did you do well, what did you not do well. There is no shame in losing to a better team, if you play hard and do your best.

#### General Coaching

82. Yelling "hit somebody" is not coaching. Tell them who to hit and how to hit them.
83. Practice the snap, you should never have more than 2 bad snaps a game
84. Have a playbook that reflects the ability of your players. Run plays they can execute.
85. It is natural to see a play on TV and want to run it, but remember you do not have NFL or College caliber players.
86. Video tape what you can. Go over it and watch each player. See what is coming from practice and what is not.
87. Have a list of skills by position that you want your players to master and make sure your practice plan and drills are addressing these.
88. If you can teach your players to watch film properly this is huge. Even if they only watch one or two plays. Don't watch let watching film become a laugh session.
89. Do you need to have a GL defense? Or should you run a GL defense all of the time?

90. Pick one offense and one defense and stick to it the whole season. Do not be a jack of all trades and a master of none.
91. You need to have a go-to play and know the adjustments that you will make to this play and why.
92. Learn how to watch a football game, the center and guard will tell you what the play is going 95% of the time
93. Learn which plays set other plays up.
94. Passing is hard at the youth level, if you only complete 20% of your passes on air don't pass 10 times during the game
95. Be a student of the game, master the fundamentals and never stop learning. Never poh poh a scheme or methodology without thoroughly investigating it.
96. Know the why, of how you do everything. If you don't ask or do something else.
97. Always go through and analyze and evaluate everything you did after the season. Write down what you did right and what to change. Don't wait, because if you do, you will forget something.

#### Closing Thoughts

98. Our major purpose is to teach athletes to think and act correctly.
99. Don't be afraid to lead – Leading is your 1st responsibility in every circumstance
100. Our legacy will be the teams that we built, the passions that we shared, and the lives that we changed. Coaching provides an opportunity to change a life every single day, in a positive, enthusiastic manner
101. Remember, it is suppose to be fun