

The Importance of the Coach in Football

By: Terry Price, Marantha Baptist Bible College

Excerpted from the 2008 WFCB Summer Football Clinic Manual (page 72)

Many young people today are desperately in need of some character development. They are NOT getting it at home, school, church or society. Parents often look to “The Coach” as a potential aid in developing their young person into a responsible young adult. Youth today are involved with issues of adulthood and yet are unable to handle them.

Athletic competition is the most visible, volatile and revealing environment our students are placed into during their school years. Numbers are confused with the antics of many of the professional athletes both on and off the field. The athletic arena is a great place to develop young men and women into becoming productive adults. The Coach occupies an extremely significant place in the developmental process of impressionable young people.

Football is a great game! What other sport involves such a large number of players working together for a common purpose and goal? Football is the “ultimate team game” requiring eleven players to function as one unit in order to accomplish the task. Football requires coaches and players to have an understanding of one’s role, sacrifice, discipline, commitment to excellence, hard work, and proper response to authority in order to be successful.

Great lessons of life can be learned through involvement in football. But coaches, parents, fans and players need to remember it is still a game. It provides a great opportunity for athletes to develop and display their character. Coach, determine to build character into your players, NOT make characters of your players! Set high goals, demands, and expectations for everyone that is a part of your team. Expect your players to do what is right.

Unfortunately there is an undue amount of attention given to one’s coaching “record” of wins and losses, and not enough concern for what has been the coach’s long term impact and influence on his players beyond football. Coach, you will be a role model of something to your players. WHAT will your players remember about YOU?

Please consider what these great coaches and men have said about football and life:

“I believe that football, perhaps more than any other sport, tends to instill in men the feeling that victory comes through hard almost slavish work, team play, self confidence, and an enthusiasm that amounts to dedication.”

Dwight Eisenhower

“People think there are great mysteries connected to the game, but there are not. It’s just teaching fundamentals.”

Paul Brown

“No coach ever won a game by what he knows; it’s what his players have learned.”

Amos Alonzo Stagg

“Getting an education is the single thing that players can accomplish that will have the most important impact to the quality of their lives. If you are not committed to getting an education, it usually makes it difficult to excel on the field.”

Nick Saban

John Wooden never talked about winning; instead, it was about the need to give your best!

Vince Lombardi never said, “*Winning isn’t everything, it’s the only thing.*” Rather what he said was, “*Winning isn’t everything, but making the effort is.*”

Let’s consider what the idea of “**THE COACH**” means:

TEACHER – An effective coach is able to teach, which is measured by what has been learned. A good teacher makes learning simple and more easily understood. We must recognize we teach by attitudes, actions, reactions, and words.

HEAD – The coach must know the game, his players, game and practice situations, and the demands outside of athletics. The coach must use and keep his head in the midst of the struggle. Be careful of “over coaching” your players.

EXAMPLE – What you ARE is more important than what you SAY or DO. The players will learn more through what is caught than taught. Be someone your players can look to as an example of what a real man should be.

COMMITTED – A successful coach realizes the cost of whatever it takes to accomplish worthy goals. Commitment plus dedication (follow-through) equals success. Young people today need someone to display a commitment to worthwhile, meaningful things.

ORGANIZED – Coaches need to plan practices, games and seasons. Planning helps make the necessary adjustments to the “what if’s” of life and athletics. There is no substitute for being organized.

AGGRESSIVE – Successful coaches are “take charge” type of people. They thrive on competition, challenge, and are driven to excel. They make things happen rather than waiting for them to happen.

CONSTRUCTIVE – A successful coach actually builds the players more than the program. A constructive coach keeps asking what is best for the team as well as for each player. Coaches need to maintain a positive mental attitude as a leader.

HEART – Successful coaches have a passion for the game, and believe in the values of it to develop character and qualities of life into their young players. Great coaches love the game and their players!

Coaches, be sure you are working with your players for THEIR good and futures, and NOT just using them for your ends and purposes. Work to have a major positive impact upon the young lives of your players.