

Skyhawks Sports: Teaching Life Skills through Sports

Playing sports can teach the importance of maintaining a positive attitude, respect, sportsmanship, responsibility, and teamwork -- but kids need your guidance to learn these life lessons. Skyhawks Sports' goal is to show you how to find and use "teachable moments" on the playing field.

Monday: Good Sportsmanship

Tuesday: Respect

Wednesday: Leadership

Thursday: Responsibility

Friday: Teamwork

Teaching Tips for Coaches

- (1) Model it: If you want them to do it, make sure you are doing it.
- (2) Expect it: When your expectations are reasonably high, campers rise to the occasion.
- (3) Teach it: Give children the tools they need to demonstrate the life lesson.
- (4) Praise it: When you see or hear a camper applying a life lesson, recognize it and praise him or her for making positive, respectful decisions.
- (5) Discuss it: Pick out times when you see other campers applying life lessons and discuss them with your campers.
- (6) Correct it: Be consistent when teaching life lessons. At the same time, be sure you are being respectful yourself while correcting the behavior.
- (7) Acknowledge it: Don't just let things slide! Be sure to notice when appropriate behavior is being exhibited, and make sure to call them on non-appropriate behavior!
- (9) Reinforce it: Remind children of their good decisions so that they remember how it felt, the praise they received, and the overall experience of applying a life lesson.
- (10) Reward it: Reward consistent applications of life lessons. Let a child pick a game, lead the group to a water break, etc.

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Monday – Good Sportsmanship

Set the Stage:

Who knows what good sportsmanship means?

What are examples of good sportsmanship?

What can you do at camp to demonstrate good sportsmanship?

Teaching points:

Coaches nurture good sportsmanship.

A coach must model good sportsmanship at every level and make it a core goal of his or her work with kids.

Work with the campers to define examples of good sportsmanship and bad sportsmanship.

Practical Application:

Point out examples of good sportsmanship. Talk about sportsmanship before a game or competition, not afterwards. Tell your campers that:

Kids can show good sportsmanship by congratulating the winner.

Being a good sport means you don't accuse the winner of cheating.

Good sports shake hands with the winner.

A good sport doesn't brag about winning

Point out examples of bad sportsmanship:

Cheating

Losing one's temper or arguing with referees or other players.

Blaming teammates for mistakes or criticizing other campers

"Trash talking" and taunting opponents or showing off

Review:

At the end of the day, review what was learned about good sportsmanship in your small group and then again in the larger group.

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Tuesday - Respect

Set the Stage:

Who knows what respect is?

What are examples of respect?

What can you do at camp to demonstrate respect?

Teaching points:

Campers must always treat their teammates, referees, and opposing players with respect, courtesy, and consideration.

Respecting others means avoiding and preventing put-downs, name-calling, trash-talking, insults, or other disrespectful verbal or non-verbal conduct.

It also means never taunting an opponent or engaging in displays of showy chest-thumping, ball-slamming, or high-fiving.

Coaches need to maintain control over the campers by preventing negative cheers, name-calling, trash-talking, and the like.

Emphasize that demeaning, ridiculing, yelling at, or embarrassing players for their mistakes or for any other reason is not acceptable.

Practical Application:

Encourage campers to:

Treat other people the way they want to be treated.

Be considerate to other campers.

Accept personal differences of other campers.

Refrain from ridiculing or embarrassing other campers.

Be polite – Use “please” and “thank you.”

Review:

At the end of the day, review what was learned about respect in your small group and then again in the larger group.

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Wednesday - Leadership

Set the Stage:

Who knows some traits of being a leader?

What are some examples of a leader?

What can you do at camp to demonstrate your leadership skills?

Teaching points:

Having a positive attitude at camp: Focus on the good things and do not dwell on the negative.

Developing a positive attitude helps kids cope with their lives and reduces destructive thinking.

As coaches we can help our campers in developing positive attitudes about sports that will help them as they face the challenges associated with growing up.

Learning something new helps a child feel proud of him or herself. It increases confidence and provides something for the child to focus on. Teaching a child to have a positive attitude will build self-esteem and confidence.

Practical Application:

Teach your camper to never say, "I can't." This statement makes a person feel inadequate.

Help children realize that they may not always be able to do everything by themselves, but with help most tasks can be accomplished.

Replace negative thinking with positive thinking. For example, if a child strikes out while playing baseball he may think, "I am so bad at baseball. I should just quit playing." He needs to learn to replace that negative thinking with a positive attitude and thought, such as, "I may have struck out, but I will practice harder and next time I will do it."

Tell the campers: "Make the best of the situation! Just think, when you leave here today you will have learned something you didn't know this morning!"

Teach campers to be friendly – What makes children get along with other campers and coaches is their disposition.

Help children discover the lesson learned – Explain to the campers that every experience, whether positive or negative, is an opportunity to grow as a leader.

Recognize examples of positive attitudes throughout the day.

Review:

At the end of the day, review what was learned about leadership in your small group and then again in the larger group.

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Thursday – Responsibility

Set the Stage:

Who knows what responsibility means?

What are examples of responsibility?

What can you do at camp to demonstrate responsibility?

Teaching points:

Instilling the value of responsibility should be one of the primary goals of sports.

Responsible behavior in sports can carry over to responsible behavior in other areas.

Being responsible is doing the right thing and being held accountable for it.

Teaching responsibility teaches campers to follow through and do what is expected of them (e.g., following camp rules).

If team rules are not followed, then consequences need to be consistently applied.

Consistency teaches responsibility.

Practical Application:

Create appropriate “jobs” that certain campers are responsible for completing throughout the day/week.

When you agree to do something, do it. This applies to the coach and the camper.

Be trustworthy. Express the importance of following through with requested behavior.

Review:

At the end of the day, review what was learned about responsibility in your small group and then again in the larger group.

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Friday – Teamwork

Set the Stage:

Who knows what teamwork means?

What are examples of teamwork?

What can you do at camp to demonstrate teamwork?

Teaching points:

Sports teach teamwork because athletes have to work with other people in order to achieve the same goal.

Discuss the game with your campers afterward. Win or lose does not matter. Emphasize actions in the game like a great pass or other cooperative efforts.

The effort given should be the focus.

Practical Application:

Discuss how working together gets things done.

Explain the concept that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Ask campers what the rules of the game/activity are.

Ask questions about how to reach the desired result and then ask the campers how they are going to do this.

For team sports, ask about what happens if the ball doesn't get passed and how they feel when they don't get a chance to have the ball.

Review:

At the end of the day, review what was learned about teamwork in your small group and then again in the larger group.