

FIRST-TIME COACHES

Help! I Volunteered

Many first-time coaches volunteer or are volunteered to do the job. With these [coaching basics](#), you can create a fun, learning soccer environment for your players in training and in games.

Interacting with Parents

Quick Tips:

- Involve the parents and enlist their support.
- Communicate your philosophy and team goals.
- Having the parents support and reinforce your discipline policies are crucial. Your expectations for player behavior should be clearly stated at the beginning of the season.
- Engage parents in the process of understanding best soccer practices

Communication

A guide to listening and communicating with players:

1. A skilled coach needs to develop communication skills as both giver and receiver to truly excel and build strong relationships with the players.
2. Active listening is a communication skill that guarantees clear, mutually understood communication, makes players more willing to talk to the coach as well as promotes a more meaningful relationship between the coach and player. In active listening, the receiver tries to understand the sender's message, puts their understanding into their own words and feeds it back for the sender's verification.
3. Good listeners pay full attention to the player's words and signal their attention to the player with small responses via their head and facial movements, low-key 'verbals' and body posture.
4. Be aware of the four common pitfalls that lead to communication break downs:
 - **Bias**, such as in the form of personal prejudice or anger, can affect how well coaches listen and how they perceive what the player is saying.
 - **Environmental factors**, such as noise, temperature and limited time after or during a game or practice, can cause coaches to focus their attention on other factors besides what the player is saying.
 - **Rehearsing a response** takes place when coaches catch the drift of what the player is saying or anticipate it's their turn to speak, so they begin to rehearse a response,

thereby missing parts of the message.

- **Hot words**, or certain words that people react to (i.e. "play favorites," "don't know what you're doing," or "stupid," causes the listener to concentrate more on the emotion of the word or its implications. This leads to the listener losing sight of what is being said.

5. Coaches can communicate with purpose by being aware of posture, eye contact, facial expressions, distance between the coach and the player, distracting behaviors and voice quality.

6. Players appreciate and expect open communication. For coaches, building these skills and insuring they understand players is crucial in addressing their questions and quandaries.

Read more on [communication skills and coaching](#) by Michael Singleton.

Additional Resources:

[Communication Between Parents & Coaches](#)

[Communication & Motivation](#)

Game Day Management

Quick Tips:

Making the game more enjoyable for players

- Teach fair tactics.
- During matches, leave the tactical decisions to the players.
- Concentrate on coaching.
- Stay calm.
- Always be positive and be a role model of fair play.
- Set high standards for themselves, the players, the officials and the parents.
- Provide good behavior guidelines to parents.
- Be firm with parents.
- Communicate.
- Enjoy the work. Enjoy the game. Strive to win.

Read more on [game day management](#) by Jozsef Fabian.