

Some Game Coaching Maxims

Some coaches prefer to be quiet during games; others like to be active. There is no right or wrong here. Here are some simple principles to keep in mind while coaching games.

- **Coach calmly**

Players tense up if you are tense or if you yell at them; they absorb information if you speak calmly. (This does not mean you cannot be loud---to be heard during a game you sometimes have to be loud---but just that you control the tone of your voice).

- **Coach off the ball**

Wait until the game has moved away from a player to offer instruction or comments. That way she can pay attention to what you are saying rather than trying to make a play and listen to you at the same time.

- **Coach positively**

If a player makes a mistake, wait a few minutes, choose a moment when the play is far from the player, and tell him how to react to the situation appropriately without mentioning that he made a mistake (e.g., to a defender, “If you are in trouble play the ball away from the middle, even kick it out of bounds if you are pressured,” rather than “Don’t kick the ball into the middle of the field.”)

- **Keep it simple**

Prepare your half time comments before the half ends, and keep them to one or two simple points per player or group of players (e.g., defenders, midfielders, forwards).

- **Ask your players what they see**

Start your half time by asking what your players have seen (keep it to a few observations or it will get overwhelming) and fold those that fit into what you want to say into your comments.

- **Coaching is teaching**

Model your coaching after your most memorable teachers; don’t overload your players with information; repeat and reinforce important points; at half time, get their attention and hold it.