

TEE BALL COACHING TIPS

1. Unfortunately, a late start in a game like tee ball or baseball typically means players won't make up the difference until the following season when he can get a better start. Get organized, develop a plan, and prepare to work hard. Learn as much about tee ball and baseball as you can. Prepare to learn enough about baseball to be able to present the material in "kid terms."
2. Kids don't know what it means to "step in the bucket" or "take an extra base" or "turn two" until you teach them and show them. Successful coaches know their audience and use analogies and common visual imagery to establish an intellectual and cognitive connection with their players. For tee ball players, these images are best when they are a bit dramatic: point the belly button toward the part of the field where you want to hit the ball (get your hips rotated), make your arm like an elephant's trunk when throwing (don't launch the ball like a catapult, **THROW** it), and point the button on your cap in the direction the ball came from when fielding a ground ball (keep your head down), for instance.
3. Whether your league keeps score or not, or whether you have a team that can win games or not, don't ever fail to take your responsibilities as a coach seriously. Being a serious coach means that you'll try to teach them something about baseball, basic skills, and sportsmanship, it means that you're attentive to player safety, and it means that while you're asking your players to put their best foot forward, so are you.
4. Having been a good player is no assurance that you will be a good coach any more than being a good student necessarily means you will be a good teacher. A coach must possess certain qualities – many coaches are satisfied with merely having characteristics. A coach has to be a good teacher, he has to be patient, he has to be confident and decisive, he has to be nurturing when his players get hurt or make mistakes, and he has to be able to get as much as he can out of his players without going too far.
5. Tell players' parents not to assume that the game of tee ball is just like the game of baseball; try to tell them the difference because it might spare you an untimely laugh and them the humiliation of asking a silly question later.
6. The most difficult thing a coach has to do is see the twelve players on the field who are not related to him. If you can do it, try to be a coach on the field and a parent off the field, and get your fellow coaches to do the same. Impartiality (and avoiding excessive impartiality) is essential to success.
7. Coaches need the assistance of their players' parents. I found that parents are normally willing to help out if they aren't too busy and they tend to learn that the more they participate in the operation of the team, the more they also stay in touch with the challenges coaches encounter as they try to build the team. (Getting parents' assistance does not mean losing control of the team to them.)
8. There can be 300 people in the stands and three coaches shouting during a game, but the one voice a player hears is his own mother's. This isn't a problem until the coach tells the player to

stop and she yells for him to go. The only thing a coach can do about this is tell the parents how tough it is to communicate with the players when there are conflicting instructions on the field. At times, it can be a safety issue.

9. Parents bring their own expectations into the season and it's safe to assume that coaches and managers do the same. The best way to ensure there are no surprises as the season develops is for the manager to hold a meeting and set the tone early. He should let the parents know that he knows what he is doing and help them develop confidence in him during this first team meeting.

10. The only way to build a good team out of a group of individuals is through effective practice. On the field, you have to be a teacher as well as a coach. Teach them what they need to know, show them what you taught them, practice the things you taught them over and over, then be prepared to do it all over again.

11. Practice, by definition, presumes repetition. Repetition is the keystone of successful game preparation. However, repetition soon turns into monotony with players, particularly tee ball players, unless you: (1) PLAN every aspect of every practice right down to the minute, (2) Maintain a distinct sense of MOTION to your practices and a coherent FLOW to them, and (3) Make a GAME out of as many things as you can.