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### The Effects of Coaching Correctly

In recent discussions of coaching in youth sports, a controversial issue has been whether there needs to be a shift in the way coaching is done. On the one hand, some argue that nothing is wrong with the way coaching is done. From this perspective, we avoid looking at ways to improve. On the other hand, however, others argue that some coaches change lives completely. In the words of Jim Thompson, a teacher at Stanford University one of this view's main proponents, "The single most important thing we do is help coaches teach kids not to be afraid to make mistakes" (qtd. in Bornstein). According to this view, coaches can have a large impact on how kids react to their mistakes and success. In sum, then, the issue is whether coaching is okay already or whether it can be a lot better with some changes. My own view is that coaching should change. Though I concede that it has been okay all this time, I still maintain that coaching needs changes. For example, coaching has been consistent with the same qualifications and training or lack thereof for years which has left some youth feeling neglected and ashamed of their skillset for the rest of their lives. Although some might object that coaching is done that way to make the youth prepare for being an adult, I would reply that we owe it to the youth to treat them with more respect and care. The issue is important because those kids will be future leaders of this country and if they don't know how to act appropriately or have confidence in themselves we will all fail.

Looking back at my experiences both positive and negative I believe I can closely associate them with the way I was being coached at the time. I remember having extended periods of time where I had a poor attitude toward everything in my life so much so that even good things were never good enough. I think Roberta Vasko Kraus, a sports psychologist who holds a Ph.D. from the University of Denver explains this concept well in her article “Youth Sports Hold a Lesson for Leaders”:

Negativity is becoming more and more the accepted norm for behavior in the stands, and it is sending a distinct and misguided message to young athletes. In various coaching surveys, coaches identify criticism and constant negative feedback from parents and themselves as the most damaging influences for young athletes.

Of course, coaches need to have more guidelines and tools to help facilitate improvements for better coaching. In my own life most of my coaches were my friends' dads or uncles. I don't believe that any of those coaches ever had actual instruction on how to coach young kids. They simply tried their best to simplify what they knew about sports so that we could understand them and sometimes it worked but other times it was terrible. In his article “The Power of Positive Coaching” David Bornstein, author of a few articles one of which was published in more than 10 languages explains that coaching sets the stage for children's lives. If coaches have more formal training on how to act appropriately with the youth on their teams they will have a positive influence on those children, asserts Bornstein.

I think it's true that sports build character. Through sports I had some of the most fun times in my life surrounded by family and friends but I also had some of the biggest disappointing and devastating times as well. From those experiences I learned things that have

always helped me in every aspect of work and life. I am now able to handle success and failure more appropriately because of the good coaches I had. Chris Wellman, a current basketball coach that has 28 years of experience as a P.E. teacher has a similar understanding in his article “Positive Coaching: A Guide to the Productive Teaching of Athletics”:

Problems and challenges found within sports are similar to those found in adult life. Virtues necessary for successful athletic competition are the same ones needed for a successful existence. Coaching should be done with an emphasis on optimism, courage, patience, perseverance, effort, honesty, and responsibility.

The coach should attempt to model these virtues and praise his athletes when they display them. He should talk to the athletes about their importance in achieving the goals and should praise them highly for effort.

Looking at the experiences in my life and the thought-provoking statements of these authors I feel that without positive coaching kids will be angry and unsatisfied with everything around them as they grow up. This is not the way the youth should feel when their athletic careers come to an end. I believe what Bornstein represents in his article saying that coaching is important in a child’s youth and that as a society we are not holding coaches to a high enough standard, asserts Bornstein. This is not the way the youth should feel when their athletic careers come to an end. Let’s begin to instruct coaches on how to be a positive coach and focus on things like effort, sportsmanship and setting goals. Coaches that do that will influence the youth greatly and we will see amazing things happen as those they coach grow old and apply those things.

Work Cited

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