

# Fundamentals of Managing & Coaching

## The Manager and Coaches Job:

When you sign up to manage or coach a team you are given the opportunity to be involved in many aspects of your team's experience. But with this opportunity comes some responsibility. The Manager will set the tone for the whole team. If the manager is not organized, not on time, and not prepared, then don't expect your team to be any different. Here are the most important things that a manager needs to do and how the coaches fit in...

- **Communication** – One of your biggest roles when you manage a team is to communicate to the parents, players, league directors, and your coaches. In order to do this you will need to have contact information handy for all of the above.

**1). Communication with the parents** – The parents expect to know the roster, the game & practice schedule, what time you expect them at the field, the snack schedule (if you have one) and cancellations or changes as soon as possible. **Coaches**, you can help your manager by taking part of the list to call in the case of a last minute change due to weather.

Parents should also feel comfortable calling the manager at home or work (whatever you prefer) and should have a contact numbers to reach you. Don't avoid a disgruntled parent, but never discuss their concerns at the field or around the kids. **Coaches**, if a disgruntled parent seeks you out to complain about the manager, tell them to talk to the manager. Nothing is worse than letting a parent bad mouth the manager behind their back. Also give your manager a heads up if you hear anything they should know.

If a parent ever crosses the line, notify your league president and let them get involved. You volunteered to have fun, not to get into a major confrontation with another parent.

**2). Communication with your coaches** – Give your coaches the same courtesy as the other parents by letting them know any changes as soon as possible. **Coaches**, let your manager know when you are out of town or can't help out for any reason. Managers count on their coaches and need to know who will be around to help out.

Ask your coaches for input, and try to include their ideas in your practices and game plans. However, make it clear that the final decision is always yours. **Coaches**, no matter how much you think your way is the right way, let it go. The manager has the final say. Remember, Spring baseball only lasts for two months.

Managers, not only do you need to keep a cool head and control your emotions, but you are responsible for controlling your coach's behavior too. Managers need to be firm with a coach who is crossing the line, and control the situation. If you manage a team you need to be comfortable telling a coach (who might be a good friend) to "*Lighten Up!*" **Coaches**, don't put your manager in this awkward position, and if you do, don't hold a grudge. I promise you that the last person a manager wants to confront is his own coach.

**3). Communication with your players** – Always remember that you are working with kids. Keep your comments positive and supportive. Give instruction, use examples, and demonstrate everything you are telling them. To tell an 8 year old to “round the base” seems simple for you, but to an 8 year old who has barely played baseball it will sound foreign. **Show them what you mean!** **Coaches**, help with the drills and demonstrate the way the manager showed the team. Don’t do it differently than the manager just because you think it should be done differently. If you feel strongly that something is being demonstrated incorrectly, talk with your manager quietly. If you still disagree, let it go. The manager has the final say.

Make practice fun, not boring. Don’t just put the players out in the field and have batting practice the whole time. Set up drills and workstations to teach specific skills. Keep kids moving from one activity to another every 15-20 minutes if possible. Finally, teach game situations – tagging up, cutoffs, run downs etc. At the early ages (e.g. T-Ball & Pinto) repetition is more important than perfect form. Let the player swing, throw, and catch as much as possible. This doesn’t mean to ignore bad form, just don’t focus on form until the player has developed some coordination, skill, and confidence. From Mustang up, you can start to focus more on developing better form, but once again through repetition.

- **Control** – Your next responsibility is to keep the practices and games under control. This includes your players, parents, coaches, and anyone else who is taking away from the fun of the game or practice. **Coaches** should understand this as well and help out.

- 1). Don’t let kids run around or climb on the bleachers. This is how somebody gets hurt. Control your team and keep them on the bench if they are not up to bat, on deck, or in the field. Discourage players from sitting with parents and siblings instead of on the bench. Keep parents out of the dugout except for brief visits to deliver water, or a give a pat on the back. **Coaches**, don’t send mixed messages. If the manger says the players should be on the bench, don’t tell them it’s ok to go sit with their parents.

- 2). Diffuse any arguments over calls, and always let the umpire save face. If another manager tries to take advantage of a young umpire, support the umpire and report it to your league president after the game. **Coaches**, always let your manager handle anything that pertains to the rules of the game.

- 3). Control the safety of your games and practices. Obey the lightning rules, make sure the field is safe to play on, and feel free to ask someone to leave the field if necessary. **Coaches** should feel just as responsible for safety. If anyone is uncomfortable with the safety of playing, it isn’t worth the risk.

- **Fairness** – Last, your role as a manager is to make every effort to equalize playing time, batting order, and positions to the best of your ability. **Coaches**, you should feel comfortable pointing out any obvious lapses to this DYBA guideline to your manager, but do it privately.

House league is designed to include every child who is interested in playing baseball. All of these kids have dreams of hitting a home run, striking out the side, or making a diving catch. Give them a chance to fulfill those dreams! Travel teams are formed to provide a more competitive environment for advanced players. There is a time and a place to put an emphasis on winning, but house league is not the time or the place. Focus on making sure that all of your kids have FUN!

Sincerely,  
Ken Shields  
Director of Baseball  
DYBA

**Some Great Youth Coaching Links**

<http://www.dyba.com>

<http://www.y-coach.com>

<http://www.t-ballcoaching.com>

<http://www.youthbaseballcoaching.com/index.html>

[http://www.homestead.com/youthbaseball\\_e\\_zine](http://www.homestead.com/youthbaseball_e_zine)