

# TIPS FOR COACHING GIRLS

Girls deserve high quality trained coaches. Male coaches can play a key role in girls' development and can be powerful allies in promoting girls' sports. Coaching a sex different from your own can present challenges. Here are some tips to help you be a great coach for girls and to contribute to their overall development.

## Create a Safe and Inclusive Girl Zone



Welcome girls when they arrive to practice. Include rituals that promote a positive team culture. When possible, reserve space just for girls to play. Use gender neutral language e.g. not referring to your players as 'guys'. Circle up when having team talks so everyone feels included. Include new and experienced players equally.

## Model Empathy



Listen to understand girls' perspectives. Be curious, ask questions.

## Provide Appropriate Challenge



Set high expectations for girls. Girls can and do want you to challenge them physically and mentally with age and skill-appropriate activities. Include options for competition, whether against other teams or by setting personal goals. Scaffold fundamental skills development so players have the opportunity to build skills over time and see their own progress.

## Give Them a Voice



Girls want to contribute to their team. Provide opportunities for your players to talk things through out loud and problem solve. Encourage them to ask questions about drills, practice, and game day situations. For instance, ask your players for their input on strategy during a half-time talk.

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## Give Appropriate Feedback Delivery



Girls want to know how they can improve their performance. Tone, timing, and setting are everything. Make sure to give them skills-based feedback with a positive delivery. For example, encourage girls with “great try, keep taking on the defender” but also provide suggestions like “next time, once the defender has committed to you, pass to your open teammate.” When you see girls doing something right, give praise for specific behaviors immediately. Also, when giving a girl constructive feedback, pull her to the side so she doesn’t feel singled out in front of the group.

## Support Girls Off the Field



Girls may need to talk about off-the-field issues. Make sure they know you are willing to talk with them or be prepared to recommend someone else they can talk to. Depending on what the issues are you can recommend a school counselor, athletic director, or a school health worker.

## Focus on Building Connections



Take the time to develop relationships with each player and promote trust with each other. Girls want to know that you care for them personally and have some kind of connection with them beyond the game. Create opportunities for teammates to connect with each other by implementing get to know you activities.

## Be Professional and Responsible



All coaches need to be highly aware of maintaining clear and professional boundaries at all times. Here are a few suggestions:

- Dress appropriately (i.e. shorts, sweats)
- Have one-on-one meetings with players off to the side but visible to others
- Don’t use inappropriate language
- Use appropriate physical touch (i.e. high-five, fist bump)
- Don’t host dinners at your house without other adults/parents present