

What are the most common coaching mistakes?

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I've been asked, what are the most common coaching mistakes. I've done my best to compile a list. While some might argue with me about these, their order, or the list itself. I really believe that these are valid and important. So, let me know what you think. Here is a list of some of the most common coaching mistakes-

- Winning isn't Everything. It's the only thing. Now, I know there will be people who might disagree, but I will never back down from the statement "Winning the game is NOT the most important thing." The most important thing is to teach the players good skills and habits that transcend the game and will carry them through their life.

- Letting your ego drive your decisions. This is closely tied with the first mistake. Too many coaches think the game is about them. If they have a losing season, then it is a reflection on them. This may be true to a certain extent, but a losing season with a team that has fun and everyone returns the next season, is a better season than one where you win the championship, but none of the kids have fun and only one or two (usually the coaches own kids) return for the next year. This type of season is a failure.

- Thinking that you are not a role model. Some coaches think that they are strictly there to teach baseball. That the players should "Do what I say, not what I do." This is not true and not reality. Players that see a coach late to practices and games, that argues with umpires and yells at players, will learn these habits. If you tell players they will be benched if they throw their bat in anger and your star player throws his bat in the first inning of the championship game, you better bench him.

- Failing to identify and utilize teachable moments. As coaches, we are role models and teachers. We have a great opportunity to influence children within the structure of the game of baseball. Teaching teamwork, handling failure and disappointment, having a good attitude, respect for authority and others are just a few of the things that we can equip our players with. These will set the players up for success, not only during the season, but on into their lifetime. Don't miss these opportunities.

- Wasting time at practices. Practices are a critical time when players should be hustling and engaged every moment. Not only will this help your practices run smoothly, but it will maximize the learning of your players. When players are standing around at practice, this leads to boredom, mischief and loss of critical time going over and learning fundamentals. It is important to have practice plans for each practice.