



# Creating a Positive Sport Environment

Help your athletes reach their potential by creating a positive sporting environment where they feel encouraged, included and recognized.

## Top 10 Tips

1

### Lead by Example Through Words and Actions

Coaches are role models, and by emulating the type of behaviour you would like to see from your athletes you are setting the tone for the season.

2

### Emphasize Development Over Winning

Create a safe environment for your athletes by focusing praise on effort and progress, rather than winning at all costs.

3

### Speak Clearly and Listen Attentively

Be clear and direct in your expectations, but also listen carefully and show interest in what your athletes have to say. Don't be afraid to make adjustments when necessary.

4

### **Give Your Athletes Ownership**

Increase engagement by providing opportunities for your athletes to have ownership over decisions.

5

### **Praise Hard Work and Effort**

Celebrate your athletes when you see them acting in positive manner – especially when it's not tied directly to winning (i.e. great effort, sportsmanship, professionalism).

6

### **Let Your Athletes Know That It's Okay to Make Mistakes**

Help your athletes to cope with the idea of failure and learn to see these bumps in the road as an opportunity for development.

7

### **Address Negative Behaviours as Soon as They Happen**

If an athlete does act inappropriately (i.e. bullying, unacceptable language) address it right away so that it does not become normalized or seen as accepted by others.

8

### **Provide Opportunities**

Ensure your athletes get fair chance to play and participate in competition.

9

### **Encourage Collaboration and Reflection**

During training, include activities that use breakout groups that allow your athletes to work together in different combinations. Debrief after each session to give your athletes structured time to reflect.

10

### **Establish Clear Goals and Key Performance Indicators**

Developing SMART (i.e. Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Timely) goals for your team or athlete group as a whole can help to motivate and create a sense of unity and direction.

References: Aspen Institute (2019) "Why Good Coaches Matter"  
Aspen Institute (2016) "Project Play"