



Powers of Positive Coaching

Regardless of a coach's skill level or knowledge, the overall approach to coaching children is simple but often overlooked.

I am amazed at some of the comments to players that I hear regularly e.g. "stupid shot" "what are you doing" "That's no good". Kids know when they have not got it right and want to find a way to correct it not simply be reminded that it's a poor shot.

Why was it a poor shot? A positive approach could start with a comment saying that was really good bat swing. "If you had stayed more still, I reckon that would have gone a long way. How about we try it again and you simply try to stay a bit more still when you play your shot, keep your head level and still." Ask the child for feedback, "did that work a little better?" From this you can build slowly or simply keep reinforcing one skill factor.

This simple but positive approach will keep the player interested and wanting to learn more. Do not try and coach five things at the same time. Yes, there may well be 10 things you would like to see improve but work on small incremental steps. The adult brain can cope with three new concepts while acquiring new skills, children even less. Keep it to one point, get that right and move on. Remember to allow for success. Start very easy and move up the chain to slightly more difficult.

Allow players to experiment, a good young fast bowler may like bowling spin, let them try, as that is the fun factor. A right handed batter may have a few balls batting left handed, this will ultimately improve their dominant side as the brain processes how to adapt.... plus, it's fun.

Every session should end on a positive note. Ensure that the last shot is something that has some merit (a good leave, a solid defence or a scoring shot). If your last shot is an air swing or stumps being rattled, then the most recent event is the one most remembered. Have fun.

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