

## Why Kids Play and Why Adults Coach

Being a kid at heart myself, I have often thought about why kids and adults get involved in youth sports. Growing up in a small town in Ohio, I was the middle child of 4 other brothers. My dad was a coach and athlete himself and he always pressed upon us the lessons that can be learned from playing youth sports. I have always wondered why he coached youth sports, at times he coached teams that did not have one of us on the team, he was even coaching opposing teams at times, and his frustration and stress could easily be seen. Every sporting event on TV was a coaching forum for my dad, he would have us all gathered around the tube and describe to us in great detail the do and don'ts of this coach that player or that play. His theory although not evident to me until I began coaching youth sports was that each player and coach has to define and implement 3 things. He would never tell us what those three things were, but in looking back at all of my youth sporting events and my coaching years, it is very easy to see when and how these 3 things mold a player and a coach. These 3 things were directly related to a player and a coach, and it was not always a home run, a touchdown or a 3 point shot, or now for me a hat trick. It was the ups and downs of competition, the twinkle in a player's eye, and the friendships that are developed along the way. These three things are Attitude, Character and Fun. Take a close look at the first 2 words, define each one in your own words and apply them to your way of thinking, your way of coaching and the kids way of playing. IF after defining these two words Attitude and Character and the definition is what makes it fun then you have the correct recipe for what my dad called unlimited life success. You see attitude is how you approach a game as a player, and the player develops his/her attitude from the coaches that teach him in practice, in games and off the field. We teach them intensity, we teach them teamwork, and we teach them fundamentals of the sport. Take a moment and think back on how you feel when your team executes a play to perfection, do you and your coaching staff not feel intense, do you not feel a sense of teamwork amongst the coaches, and are not the fundamentals you taught reconfirmed in your mind all over again. That's the direct relation that the player has on a coach and vice-versa. Now take a moment and think back on when your team did not perform the play had low intensity and did not implement teamwork. I can guarantee you that your first thoughts were, we need more intensity, we need better teamwork and we got to get back to the fundamentals. You start to doubt your coaching, the player starts to doubt his ability and the next practice session would include these things. At this practice the team and the coaches all feel rejuvenated, more intense and a sense of teamwork is thick in the air. This scenario is replayed thousands of times in our days of youth sports as a player and as a coach, the attitude during these scenarios is very important, one must always as a player and as a coach radiate with a good attitude, in turn a solid, honest character is born. Character is a person's definition of his life to the world, in turn the meaning of a person's character is his/her attitude towards his/her walk in life, which has an end result of FUN.

**In summary, answer these questions, why do we play youth sports and why do we coach youth sports...We do this because it is FUN, we do this because we need the direct relationship between a player and a coach and vice-versa. As long as you remember as a player and as a coach that a good attitude builds a great character, then the unlimited life success that my dad always talked about will be FUN.**

**I as a coach had found an organization, and my son as a player had found an organization that mirrored the above story. That organization is Western Reserve Youth Sports out of Streetsboro, Ohio. In its infancy there were 5 people who had been involved with another organization and deep in our soul we felt that it just wasn't right, it was the wrong attitude the wrong character building and it just was not fun. If all of us look back at that time and remember our player's actions, that twinkle was not there in their eyes. I had the privilege to help build WRYS, mainly the football program with a fine gentleman, Calvin Pratt. This man had everything my father had instilled in me and together we started to build the football program. Uncontrollable events in my life forced me to move out of state and leave the program. However before I left, I was able to attend and coach the very first football practice of this new league. This dream that started by watching films, developed and planned in a dining room of Art Borahovsky and nurtured in a meeting room at a Motel 8, showed me 3 things on that football field that day. It showed me that every player, every coach had a good attitude, every player and every coach had that twinkle in their eye and I knew that no matter what happened that first year it was going to be FUN for everyone.**

**You see that is why kids play and adults coach!!!!**