

TIPS FOR CREATING A POSITIVE TEAM ENVIRONMENT



Use these tips to help you create a positive environment in which athletes can perform at their full potential and where abuse and misconduct are not tolerated.

- ❑ **Set behavioral expectations with athletes** (and parents/guardians of minor athletes) up front. Be sure your expectations are age- and developmentally appropriate. Give examples of positive behaviors you would like to see as well as inappropriate behaviors and their consequences.
- ❑ **Model appropriate and respectful behavior** with athletes, parents, officials, and other coaches. Do not use slurs or other demeaning language when talking to or about others.
- ❑ **Create an environment that welcomes athletes of every background.** For example, ask every athlete how to correctly pronounce their name. Actively encourage athletes to respect each other's cultural practices and unique identities.
- ❑ **Be aware of athletes' age and developmental level** when talking to them. Using clear, simple language makes it easier for everyone to understand.
- ❑ **Pay attention to the safety needs of athletes.** Athletes from marginalized groups are at a higher risk for being abused, bullied, and harassed.
- ❑ **Let athletes know that winning is one part of sport.** Their growth and well-being are also important.
- ❑ **Keep lines of communication open** with athletes and their parents/guardians. Get their feedback on your communication and coaching style. Offer athletes multiple ways to share their concerns.
- ❑ **Discuss core values, expectations, and policies often.** Be consistent in holding people accountable for following them.
- ❑ **Respond to misconduct** immediately and consistently.
- ❑ **Talk to athletes about bystander intervention.** Model bystander intervention by saying or doing something when you see abusive behaviors. Use the [Talking with Athletes About Bystander Intervention](#) handout to help your athletes learn and practice bystander intervention strategies.