



Coaching Guide: Eden Prairie Soccer Association

A summary of principles and practices for coaches to help create a safe and rich environment where players can thrive and participation in youth sport can live up to its promise.

Outcomes of a Successful Season:

- They want to come back again and again
- They make friends
- They feel they are learning and improving
- They realize that mistakes are a normal part of the learning process
- They learn that competing means more than just winning
- They become better people
- They look back at the experience with fond memories

Coaching Priorities:

1. Build relationships – They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care
2. Create a positive learning environment – Maximize opportunities to try, and try again
3. Be player-centered – Player decision-making and problem-solving, not GPS instructions
4. Let the game be the best coach – "Guide on the side," not "sage on the stage"

Modern Coaching Methods (evidence-based)

Avoid (expired)	Replace with (21st Century)	Rationale
Static Drills	Dynamic, Game-like Activities	More challenging, realistic
Laps, Lines, and Lectures	Learning on the Move with a Ball	More engaging and effective
Elimination Games	Re-Entry Games	More learning opportunities
Coaching to the Average	Personalized Challenges and Feedback	More motivating
Coach Monologue	Coach Questions for dialogue	Deeper thinking/learning
Authoritarian leadership	Servant leadership	Meet their needs, not ours

Key Coaching Phrases:

- "I'm glad you're here": Connect and celebrate their participation (half the battle is showing up)
- "Show Me": Have them do while you observe and encourage
- "Not Yet": When they say "I can't," you add "not yet"
- "I noticed how you . . .": Make praise specific, not just "good job"