



PROTECTING TRADITIONS WHILE LOOKING AHEAD

PRESERVING AMERICA'S GREATEST GAME

As we embrace the critical challenges and realities facing our game, we must adapt, including how we teach and play it. Football as we know it has changed, as have the athletes. Football can enrich and nourish a young athlete's life through lessons, discipline, and companionship if we teach it correctly. Our sport is ever-changing – it always has been – so, it's natural that we adapt in how it's taught, played and experienced.

POSITIVE, NECESSARY CHANGES

Football can be a young athlete's doorway to exponential growth and holistic development.

- Coaches should strive for fun and engaging drills to hold athletes' attention and interest
- Time on the field should also be educational, formational, and worthwhile
- Football can teach players life lessons without them directly recognizing this at the time
- Focus should always be on safety, fostering an experience that athletes can enjoy

By offering a 21st century youth football experience, your priority is the safety and holistic development of your players. Parents appreciate seeing this level of care as well as hearing and reading you communicate it. Your forward-thinking and transparency keeps parents and families inspired. Parents are the foundation of youth sports – proudly show them how your football program puts them and their kids first.

DITCHING "OLD-SCHOOL" FOOTBALL

The days of "because I said so" coaching are long gone. Coaches can become frustrated because today's youth culture tends to look for instant gratification. Societal experiences could also give youth a sense of entitlement. Strategies will be questioned, and patience tested because athletes will not care how much coaches know, until they know how much you care. It is essential to work with your players' strengths and work to improve their weaknesses, both on and off the field. Strive to grow in technique and work to make your lessons applicable to them.

BEING A TRANSFORMATIONAL COACH

Most youth coaches volunteer because of a love of the game and to positively impact players' lives. Impactful coaches make players want to work harder and to be the best version of themselves. Ways to be a more transformational coach include:

- Be aware of drill and equipment changes as the game evolves
- Keep in mind, "A good coach improves a player's game, but a great coach improves a player's life!"
- Connect with players and build a rapport

Remember, each player learns differently, so having a coaching staff with diverse styles rooted in the Football Development Model's philosophy can help them thrive. The more mutual trust and respect there is for one another, the harder the team will work for each other.