

Nutrition: A Teachable Moment

A teachable moment is an opportunity to use the 6A's to communicate with the child a lesson through sport or life. The effective use of teachable moments requires a coach to have the requisite knowledge of the issue at hand while also having the ability and willingness to discuss the issue with the child.

Nutrition

Requisite knowledge for the coach:

1. The diet should be balanced, contain foods from a variety of sources, and eaten in moderation.
2. Caloric expenditure (physical activity) and intake (eating) must be balanced if weight is to be maintained.
3. Junk foods add little, if any, nutritional value to the diet and are usually high in calories.
4. Obesity increases the risk of heart disease and related health problems.

Recognizing a Teachable Moment

Example: You observe one of your young athletes drinking soda or eating candy before practice.

Communication Points:

- “Sometimes when you run out of energy it is because the soda that you drank only lasts a short time. Do you have other choices at home?”
- “It is important to give your body the right foods so that you will have the energy and nutrients to play and feel your best. Eating fruit or a granola bar might be a better choice for you to eat so that you can give your body the right type of fuel before practice.”

Note: If you suggest that your athletes should make healthier eating choices, try to support these healthy choices by modeling healthy eating behaviors.

