

Playing in the Heat: 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.

Playing in the Heat

Requisite knowledge for the coach:

1. When walking or running, children produce more heat than adults in relation to their body weight and skin surface area.
2. Youngsters are not as efficient in executing movement patterns, so they generate more heat than adults when performing a similar task.
3. Sweating capacity is reduced in children compared to adults, resulting in a lowered ability to cool the body.
4. Children should hydrate 20 to 30 minutes before practices or games. During practice or a game, periodic drinking should be strongly encouraged.
5. Clothing should be lightweight and limited to one layer of absorbent material to facilitate evaporation of sweat and to expose as much skin as possible. Sweat-saturated garments should be replaced with dry ones.

Children with the following conditions are at a potentially high risk for heat stress: overweight, if the child is suffering from a fever, cystic fibrosis, gastrointestinal infection, diabetes, heart disease, sweating insufficiency syndrome, and mental retardation.

Recognizing a Teachable Moment

Example: As practice/camp progresses, your athletes become hot, tired, and may feel dizzy or lightheaded.

Communication Points:

- “Why do you think you sometimes feel dizzy or lightheaded after practice? Sometimes we feel this way when our bodies get too hot and can’t cool down fast enough.”
- “If we are playing and we feel too hot, we should help our body cool down by going inside where it is cool, drinking water, or getting under the shade. These are all good things to do when you are active in the heat, especially in Arizona during the summer.”

