

Top 5 Tips to Maximize Learning in Youth Sport

- During the early stages of learning, give athletes a visual demonstration to help them gain a mental picture of the movement. A picture is really worth a thousand words during this stage of learning. Be specific, concrete, and correct in your demonstration. Be sure to tell your players what to look for during this demonstration.
- In general, the greater the number of practice trials, the greater the learning. Coaches should endeavor to get youth as many touches and repetitions as possible. This means that athletes should spend little time in lines or listening to coaches' speeches.
- The adage "practice makes perfect" is not quite correct. "Practice makes permanent" would be more accurate. Ensure that your athletes practice the skills that should become relatively permanent.
- When competition is added to a learning context, learning will decrease. Coaches should limit the competitive elements in the majority of practice sessions. Save the scrimmage or game activity for the last five minutes of practice.
- Coaches should strive to supply athletes with short, specific, positive, corrective feedback to aid in the learning process. For more information about feedback, please refer to the "Ten Tips for Giving Great Feedback" in the coaches' archive.