

SASA Coach Guide: Best Practices for Communicating with Parents and Athletes

Introduction: Why Communication Matters

Clear, positive communication builds trust between coaches, players, and families. It helps everyone understand expectations, fosters a supportive environment, and ensures players have the best experience possible. As a coach, you set the tone for how players and parents engage with the league and each other.

Before the Season

Introduce Yourself

- Send an introductory message or email to parents and players at least one week before the first session.
- Share your name, contact information, and a little about your background.
- Outline the schedule, location, and what players should bring (e.g., water, shin guards, ball).
- Set expectations about arrival times and any league policies. Refer to your Coach Playbook for assistance!

Sample Introductory Message:

"Hello everyone, my name is [Coach Name] and I'm excited to coach your player this season. Our first practice is on [date] at [location]. Please have your player bring water, shin guards, and their ball if they have one. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions at [phone/email]. Looking forward to a great season!"

During the Season

At Each Session

- Begin practice by telling players what the focus will be for that day.
- End practice by highlighting something the group did well and what they can look forward to next time.
- Keep instructions clear, short, and age-appropriate.

Keep Parents Informed

- Brief parents at the end of practice if there are important updates.
 - Consider sending a weekly message summarizing the focus of the session, progress, and reminders.
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General Communication Tips

With Players

- Be positive and encouraging.
- Focus on effort and improvement rather than mistakes.
- Use players' names and make every player feel included.
- Ask open-ended questions to help players think and engage.

With Parents

- Stay calm and professional, even if concerns are raised.
- Be approachable but set boundaries about when and how to contact you.
- Emphasize that your goal is for players to learn and enjoy the game.

Common Challenges and How to Handle Them

Situation	Recommended Approach
A parent is upset about playing time	Listen respectfully, explain the league's policies (e.g., every player is entitled to play half of each half), refer them to the age group commissioner if needed.
A player is disruptive or struggling	Speak privately with the player if appropriate, focus on positive behavior, and encourage them to join the group in the fun. If necessary, involve parents.
Conflicting instructions from different adults	Communicate early and often with your team parents. Encourage them to take the role of cheerleader and be a positive support for the athlete.

At the End of the Season

- Thank players and parents for their commitment and support.
- Share what the team accomplished and how players improved.
- Encourage players to continue playing and invite them back next season.

Key Reminders

- You are a role model: your tone and behavior influence how players and families view the game.
- Keep communication consistent, respectful, and focused on the players' best interests.
- When in doubt, ask for guidance from SASA leadership/Coaching Coordinator coaches@soccersanangelo.org

For questions or further support, please contact the SASA Coaching Coordinator: coaches@soccersanangelo.org or visit <https://www.ntxsoccer.org/coaching-resources/> for additional guidance.