

## Motivations

<https://www.breakthroughbasketball.com/mental/motivate-players.html>

### Motivating Youth Players

In many ways, motivating young players is very easy. They are much less complicated than older players who are motivated for many different reasons. For young players it's simple.

They just want to HAVE FUN! That is clearly their biggest motivation factor.

With that said, there are some things you need to do to keep their attention. You must be very prepared and organized with a good practice plan so you can keep things moving very efficiently. You don't want confusion or kids standing in line. That's when they get antsy and things get out of control.

Not to mention, kids just want to keep moving. It's fun for them to be stimulated and keep moving.

#### Here are some tips to keep practice fun and motivate young players:

- **Keep lectures short** (2 minutes or less). If you lecture any longer than this, most kids will be in "lala" land by then. And kids don't come to practice to hear you talk the whole practice, they come to have fun.
- **Keep drills short and fun** (half court - 5 minutes or less, full court - 10 minutes or less). If you stay on a drill for too long, it becomes monotonous and the kids lose interest.
- **Clap Method** - You tell the kids at the very beginning of your first practice that whenever you clap, they have to clap the same number of times you clap. You clap twice, they clap twice. Make sure to also tell them that this is time for them to listen.

You can usually get everybody's attention after 2 to 3 sequences of claps and that only takes normally 3 to 5 seconds. Much better than yelling so much you can't talk the next day.

- **Line Method** - Whenever you blow the whistle or yell "lines", the kids race to an assigned line and sit down. You might have 5 lines of 6 or 3 lines of 3, depending on the size of your group. The team that lines up and sits down first wins. Congratulate them with some enthusiasm by giving them fist-pounds, high fives, and/or verbal praise.

I've seen both of these methods work in small practices and huge groups.

- **Treats** - When we attend youth soccer practice, all the kids get treats at the end. One of the parents is in charge of supplying treats. It works wonderfully because the kids know that if they participate they get a little snack at the end. It doesn't have to be a sugar filled snack. The point is that kids love treats. They look forward to the treat after practice. It makes everything more fun.

## Motivating Female Athletes

Let's face it. Women tend to compete for different reasons than men. Women will react to motivation techniques in a different way than men.

This is why women require different kinds of motivation to achieve.

Quite often men are coaching women's teams. And frankly men don't usually understand the dynamics of motivating and coaching female players. Obviously not the ideal situation and this can be frustrating for everyone involved.

If you can understand some of the differences in what makes them tick, you'll go a long way in successfully implementing the motivation techniques in this guide.

Here are some of the differences you should consider:

- First, simply by realizing that women react to motivation techniques differently will solve many problems. This will allow you to try different things and not get stuck on using a tactic just because it worked well with boys.
- This is an issue with men too, but with girls you need to be especially careful about them spending too much time with only one or two teammates for partner work. Requiring them to switch partners and teams can be important.
- Women tend to be more goal oriented than men.
- Women tend to put a lower priority on winning than men. Everyone wants to win, but women tend to think more in terms of goals and the big picture.
- Boys tend to put a higher priority on school sports, where women tend to put a priority on more than just sports.
- Women appreciate more of a nurturing family type of environment with camaraderie. Conversely, too much yelling and screaming can be a big de-motivator. A more Zen-like environment seems to be a more productive environment for women.
- Team chemistry and camaraderie is important for men. For women it is paramount! It's very important for everyone to get along and feel like a team.
- Women tend to perceive their skills in more of a negative way than men. Many times they are better than what they think. So self perception and confidence is very important for women. Make sure your players are comfortable with what is asked of them and their position on the team.

- Clear and positive feedback is critical for women. They will respond to good communication, good listening, and frequent feedback. This is what they almost always want!

When coaching a girls team, remember that they need that reinforcement that they belong. Give them confidence. Provide constant feedback and excellent communication. Spend lots of time developing camaraderie and team chemistry. Remember each player is different and has different needs. Do the little things to show you care. Do all those things well and you'll have a team that will run through a brick wall for you!