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We asked teens in an online survey what coaches should care about most: winning, teaching, or giving everyone a chance to play. Hundreds of teens answered, and it turns out that winning was a loser:

- 46% said **giving everyone a chance to play**
- 45% said **teaching new skills**
- 9% said **winning**

Winning Isn't Everything

"When you are a good coach, winning or losing is secondary to you. You care more about the morale of your team," said Daniel, 13.

Most teens said they respect coaches who put winning in perspective. Kim, 13, told us, "A good coach isn't obsessed with winning, but will motivate you and your team to want to win."

Winning seemed to be slightly more important to boys than girls in our survey: 17% of the boys who answered said coaches should care most about winning compared with only 7% of girls.

Understanding Players

A coach has to understand a player's weaknesses and strengths, many teens said. "They need to know the sport and the athletes well enough to make good choices for the athlete," said Shannon, 14.

Many teens told us about coaches who helped them. When Aerielle, now 13, played soccer in third grade, she was small and skinny and the other kids picked on her. "One day the coach sat next to me and said that even though I couldn't kick the ball down the field, I was fast enough to be at the other end to receive it. She said that I should forget about what other people think and stick to what I try to do, what I can do, what I like, and what it all makes me. The rest of that season I was the best midfielder on the team and even was chosen to go to the All-Star game."

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