

III. Traits

Traits of a Good Assistant Coach

The following is a list of characteristics every good assistant coach should demonstrate. In order to get a head coaching position some day, you need to work on the following traits:

- **DEPENDABLE.** This means that he or she will be on time for every practice session, help as requested and meet all of his or her responsibilities. Head coaches have enough to contend with without worrying whether their assistant will be on time or even able to attend.
- **LOYAL.** It is OK to offer suggestions or debate philosophical issues in private, but an assistant must be totally supportive during practice sessions, games and in public. This also holds true when talking with parents. A unified front is absolutely necessary for a team to function and succeed.
- **UNDERSTANDING** of young people. It is not good enough to merely have knowledge and experience. High school coaches need to teach, nurture and motivate their young charges, and they are all unique. Young people may make mistakes and they definitely learn at different rates, which means that not everything will go smoothly and easily.
- **EAGER** to work with student-athletes. It is important to remember that players on a high school team are still young people. They are not professionals or even high-level collegiate players who can be traded or recruited. Young athletes need repetition in practice sessions and quality instruction in order to develop.
- **ENTHUSIASTIC.** Being excited and bringing high energy to practice sessions every day, sharing their knowledge and contributing to the improvement of student-athletes is absolutely essential for high school coaches.
- **POSITIVE.** Very few people, and that also includes young people, will be receptive and motivated to work with an individual who is not positive and encouraging. Negative individuals do not inspire, motivate and provide leadership, which is necessary for a team.
- **RECEPTIVE.** While it is OK for assistant coaches to occasionally have differing points of view, they should also be willing to adapt and learn something new in order to fit into the program. After all, in life we all have things to learn and it is important to at least be open to new ideas and approaches.

Head coaches might want to go over these traits with your assistants. Remind them that their turn to make the big decisions will come soon enough.