



THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES

of practice are the most important!



Learn how the first five minutes of your Tee Ball practice can set the tone for success and **FUN!**

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Publication

The first five minutes

of your Tee Ball practice may be the most important five minutes of your team's time together. The first five minutes set the tone for what can be a fantastic, fun-filled practice or a confusing, boring exercise in futility.

Much of what follows those introductory five minutes, will be determined by how well you assess your team's mood, and how much you do as coach to directly influence it in a positive way.

HERE ARE FIVE WAYS TO MAKE THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF PRACTICE COUNT:



MINUTE 1. Take a minute to address each of them by name.

It is a great thrill for your players to know that you know them by name. Likewise, they realize how unimportant they are if you refer to them as "Hey, kid!" It may take a practice or two before you recognize them and can identify them easily, but it is well worth the effort.





MINUTE 2. Have a Plan. Explain your Plan.

Give them something to look forward to. **Take a minute to explain what your team will be doing today.** Do a good sales job here and they will jump through hoops for you.

“Guys, today we’re going to learn how to run the bases the right way, and we’re going to learn how to field a baseball using a “Gator.” This always raises the level of curiosity, as everybody wants to know, “A *REAL Alligator*, Coach?” We’re also going to learn how to get runners out at first and second base, we’re going to learn how to catch a pop fly, and we’re going to see who can “Catch the Coach.” Are you ready to have some fun and play ball?”



MINUTE 3. Got a kind word to say? Say it!

Who knows what little Johnny went through at school today? Maybe he had a fight with his sister – and she won. Maybe he’s in a little trouble with Mom or Dad. Maybe the kind words you say will be the only ones he hears all week. **Take a minute to find something positive to say.**





MINUTE 4. Look pleasant.

The kids could care less how motivated you are to win the Tee Ball Championship this year. They, on the other hand, are incredibly motivated by the snacks that will be handed out at the end of practice. If they sense too much frustration on the part of their coach or parents, they will sometimes “shut down” or “check out.” Expect them to have difficulty grasping some concepts - they’re 4, 5 and 6 years old! A pleasant disposition is crucial. It will help **YOU** when they are struggling to master something, and it will help **THEM** if they sense that **“Coach thinks I can do this.”** If your players sense that you would rather be pulling your own teeth than coaching them, it won’t be long before you’ll wish you were. **Take a minute to let your face say you’re glad to be there.**





MINUTE 5. Engage them in a fun drill or activity right away.

Find a drill or game that they seem to enjoy, and let them do it first thing out of the gate. It should be something that loosens them up and gets them into the right frame of mind in a fun way. This will get them into your corner quickly and get them ready for more focused activity later. It is also a good idea to do another fun drill about halfway through the practice as a reward for good effort. **Take a minute to make it fun for them (and YOU!).**

We sometimes forget that our little charges come to us fresh from a day of school or other activity, charged with lots of energy (fueled by sugar), excited to see their buddies, and ready for fun! Sometimes, however, they are ready for anything **BUT** Tee Ball. They see something special in every plane passing overhead, every crawling bug, even in a pile of dirt and rocks.

As coaches, it is our task to draw them into the game, find joy in playing as a team, and instill in them an excitement for playing and enjoying the great sport of baseball.





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