Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports: Social Engagement

Objectives
1. Students will understand expectations for how to interact with officials.
2. Students will understand expectations for how to interact with each other.

Skills and Competencies in Focus
1. Understanding social cues and demonstrating basic conflict resolution strategies
2. Collaborating and working with others as part of a team

Facilitate a conversation with your team using these talking points
Officials are people, not objects of frustration. We will treat officials with decency and respect because without their willingness to do this job, we wouldn’t have games. This means we will:
- React appropriately when calls don’t go our way.
- Respectfully and calmly ask for clarification when you don’t understand a call.
- ALWAYS express gratitude to the officials at the end of a match.

Teammates are people and will also make mistakes. We will treat our teammates with decency and respect because we care about them. This means that we will:
- Not get angry about mistakes but explain/show how to do something better.
- Encourage each other with our words, not tear each other down.
- Find ways to demonstrate positive sportsmanship and lead by example.

Opponents are people, and we will respect them as competitors. This means that we will:
- Use respectful language when talking to them or about them.
- Congratulate them when they win, encourage them after you win.
- Recognize game: when they make a good play, tell them. It’s okay to tip the hat or high five an opponent. It doesn’t show weakness.

Tune into Team Progress
What to look for:
- Count how many times your players say “nice play” or “good catch” to each other and opponents.
- Count how many times players handle themselves coolly and calmly when they miss a shot or strike out.

Remember: Highlight and acknowledge publicly when you see what you want to see. This reinforces the behavior for the other kids too.
Summary to close (coaches deliver to the team)
We work hard, practice hard, and play hard for ourselves and each other. We want to win, and we want to be good citizens and representatives for our families, school, and classmates. Wins and losses are temporary but how you play the game and how you treat others will always be remembered. While we all strive to be the best in the world, remember to be your best FOR the world.