Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports: Responsible Decision Making

Objectives
1. Students will learn how to apply ethics to decision making

Skills and Competencies in Focus
1. Thinking flexibly and redirecting attention.
2. Understanding and recognizing more complex emotions and situations.

Discussion
Ask: What are ethics? (looking for: moral principles or something similar. Younger kids may not have an answer.)

Ask: What is more important, winning a game or acting ethically?

Scenario: The game is close and time is running out. The official blows the whistle and calls the ball out of bounds on the other team. (*This is a basketball scenario. Make applicable to your own sport.) However, you know with absolute certainty that you stepped out of bounds with the ball first. What is your ethical responsibility?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tell the official</th>
<th>Don’t tell the officials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cons: Other team gets the ball, you might lose. Teammates might get mad at you.</td>
<td>Cons: Maybe none. Maybe the other team knows the truth and they get mad at you.</td>
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<td>Pros: In the moment, maybe none. Official will show you appreciation. If your team thinks ethics are important, maybe they’ll affirm your decision too.</td>
<td>Pros: You get the ball. Your team might win.</td>
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<td>Long term: Your coach will know. How will they react?</td>
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Tune into Team Progress
What would you do? This will actually require a lot of introspection on your part. You have to determine what you would expect a player to do in the above scenario or any other. Your reaction to these scenarios will ultimately determine your players actions.
Summary to Close

Sometimes ethical behavior is hard. Sometimes it seems like it contradicts your own goals. On one hand, we preach that we want to win at all costs. On the other hand, we preach integrity and sportsmanship. Sometimes the hard thing is the right thing and we care about integrity more than the scoreboard. As teammates, we want our teammates to be the best people they can be and sometimes that means putting integrity above winning.