Coaching Social and Emotional Skills in Youth Sports
Responsible Decision Making

Objectives
1. Students will use problem solving skills to address a school issue
2. Students are able to think through three stages of problem solving

Skills and Competencies in Focus
1. Organizing information to solve problems.
2. Collaborating and working with others as part of a team.

Activity

Three stages of problem solving:

*If there is another applicable problem or issue you think would better apply to your athletes, please feel free to use instead.

1. **Identify a problem**: Social media use by students

   Explain: Social media can be pretty negative and filled with lots of trolls and even bullies.

2. **Analyzing Situations**:

   *Ask students why they think people can be negative on social media.* (possible answers: They think it’s funny, they are mad about something, maybe they are unhappy and are taking out frustrations on other people, some people think it’s cool to put down other people, etc.)

   *Ask students how it probably feels to be the target of online trolls or bullies.*

3. **Solving Problems**:

   *Ask students how they think they can help solve the problem.* (note: this problem is pretty widespread, which the kids will probably acknowledge. So, turn the conversation to how they can do their part to make it better, even if it doesn’t fix the problem.)

**Challenge**: Encourage kids to commit to making one positive post about someone or something every day.

(note: If somebody gives an awesome solution that could lead to a better challenge, use it.)
Tune into Team Progress

As your season progresses, your team will inevitably deal with various issues and challenges. When you recognize that is happening, discuss how to address kids by using consistent language as above.

Closing

The world is filled with negativity and a lot of problems. Being able to understand problems and situations is a critical skill that students will need through high school and beyond. Also, you can have a positive impact on others dealing with their own problems simply by providing positive statements and/or compliments.