

# Ten Steps To Help Your Coach Help You

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Ask the vast majority of volleyball players what was the difference during that one practice, game or season when they played their best and the answer is universal; "I was really having fun then!" Yet many times they overlook one of the key reasons that time was so enjoyable, their coach, the one in control of the whole situation, was having fun too!

Let's face it: Your coach is a human being. Yes, believe it or not, that person who makes you condition, gets on you when you mess up, and disciplines you if you really mess up has feelings too. Whether they admit this to your team or not, it does matter to them how they are treated by their players. In order to truly understand this, you must realize why someone coaches in the first place. For the vast majority of coaches it is very simple: They love the game and they love teaching it to young people. It's fun for them. Think about it, why else would they devote their time and effort to a team?

Some also feel coaches are "just in it to win." Yes, there isn't a coach alive who doesn't enjoy winning more than losing. However, many experienced coaches will tell you their most enjoyable season was not the year they had their best team - or even their best record. Why? Because many times those same teams that achieved so well caused the coach so many headaches both on and off the court that most of the fun of a successful season was ruined for them. I can honestly say myself that my most enjoyable season as a coach was not the year I had my best team. So if it's not winning that motivates people to coach, what's left? Simply their love of the game and the opportunity to have fun doing something they love! Now let me ask you this: Would you have fun if the players you were in charge of were constantly causing problems and treating you poorly? I seriously doubt it! I always make a point to impress on my team at the start of every season, "If your coach has fun - you will too!" What can you and your teammates do to ensure you coach is having fun working with your team? Try the following ideas and see if it doesn't bring a smile to your coaches' face, (and a boost to your level of play):

1. Personally set a goal to be the first one in the gym before every practice or game. - Coaches love it when their players get in the gym early, and those who straggle in "just on time" or a few minutes late impress no coach.
2. Always volunteer to help set up the nets. If this task is done, start warming up early. - Your coach has many important jobs to take care of every day for your team. Do not make them waste time doing things you can do for them - they will greatly appreciate it!
3. Always greet your coach with a cheerful smile. - Doesn't it give you a good feeling when you are welcomed pleasantly? Your coach is no different. "Treat others as you want them to treat you."
4. Always run everywhere in the gym during practice. When the team is called together, set a goal to be the first one over to the coach each time. All coaches love hustle and enthusiasm and hate the opposite.
5. Always look directly at your coach when they are speaking. - This shows respect and an eagerness to listen, learn and cooperate. *(From the director - I would add a corollary to*

*this step - Always look directly at your coach when you are talking to him. Being able to stand up straight, look your coach in the eye and speak your mind is a sure sign of maturity and self confidence - two things your coach is going to love seeing you display.)*

6. Never talk when your coach is speaking. - This is very disrespectful and no one enjoys being “dissed”. Besides, how can you possibly be listening if you're talking yourself?
7. Make every effort to do what the coach is asking for at all times. - That is all any coach expects of their players- to do their best.
8. Never question the correctness of your coach's instructions or strategy in front of others. - This is usually viewed as being disrespectful and puts your coach on the defensive in front of everyone. Nothing good can come of this.
9. If you do have a question, respectfully ask the coach one-on-one during a break or after practice. - You'll get a much better response to your inquiry and your approach to the situation will be appreciated.
10. Learn what your coach likes to talk about besides volleyball and make an effort to chat a little when appropriate. - Everyone likes it when others show an interest in what they enjoy.

I'm sure some players will respond to these ideas by saying, "Why should I help my coach help me? I'm already working hard - and besides -it's their job to help me!" That's very true. What everyone must realize is, people work harder at any task or job when they are enjoying themselves doing so. This is just human nature.

Do the “little things” suggested above and see for yourself if your coach doesn't start having more fun working with you and your team, and thus start doing “those extra things” the whole team really appreciates. Then watch as you find yourself and the others putting out that extra effort consistently, playing not only harder but better, and enjoying it! In addition, you'll be learning a set of behaviors all “true athletes” possess and use on a daily basis. This approach really is a “win-win” situation for all involved. Good luck having fun!!