

CHILD-FIRST SPORTS COACHES – 5 SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

What are the qualities of a great sports coach? Here are Stuart Armstrong's and Paul Thompson's 5 skills for success.



Everything begins with the needs and rights of the child

“The notion of child-first coaching is that we are placing the wants and the needs of children front and centre...So, we're taking a rights-first approach, as enshrined in the UN convention on the rights of the child...one of the rights is the right to an appropriate education. So, we call that the right to develop. One of the other rights that we've adopted is the right to play. That happens regardless of context. So a coach comes along and says, 'Oh yeah, I do equal game time for everybody – but when it's a league game, sometimes we've got to take it more seriously...' No. That doesn't apply. A right is a right, regardless of context.” Stuart Armstrong



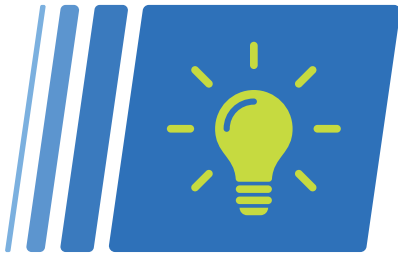
The ability to communicate well, to be empathetic and a good listener

“We use this term 'attunement', which is about sort of sensing. It's more than just hearing – it's also having enough connection that you can perceive what's going on with an individual or a group. And sometimes that's intuitive; it's not always what you necessarily see or hear or feel, it's something else.” Stuart Armstrong



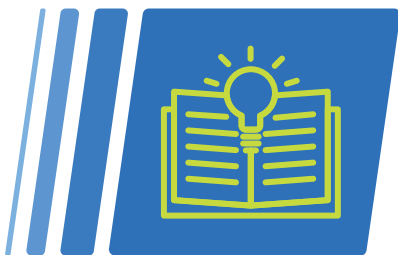
Being able to build rapport and develop relationships

“Being able to build rapport and develop relationships is key to the delivery of positive change, and I believe also sits at the heart of child-centred coaching. These relationships must be built on honesty, openness, mutual trust and respect – which is why the qualities of honesty & humility are so important.” Paul Thompson



Be open to new ideas and ways of doing things

“We place a big emphasis on developing your coaching by doing. Whether you’ve been reading an article in a coaching magazine, listening to a podcast or attending a workshop, the question is, how can you independently take what you’ve have learned and try it out in your own real situations? This is what we encourage all of our apprentices to do: try new things and learn from either their successes or what didn’t work.” Paul Thompson



Knowledge of the sport

You don’t need in depth knowledge of the sport or activity you are going to coach, you just need these transferable skills.

“...problem solving, communication, self-management, self-belief and team work...use these to plan and deliver positive experience to children and young people.” Paul Thompson

