

SEPTEMBER 20, 2025



OKLAHOMA INTERSCHOLASTIC **BMX LEAGUE**

COACHING PHRASES & POSITIVE APPROACH
FOR VOLUNTEERS OF ANY CLUB SANCTIONED BY THE LEAGUE

Coaching Phrases & Positive Approval

Why This Matters?

Positive coaching helps athletes grow not only in skills but also in confidence, resilience, and teamwork. Using encouraging language and structured escalation builds trust and keeps youth sports fun and developmental.

_____ Initial Here that You Watched This Ted Talk

<https://youtu.be/VXw0XGOVQvw?si=vHasLs3fkTkWZUCD>

Positive Redirection Examples

The top priority of every coach is the health, safety, and personal growth of athletes.

- 🌸 Let's see if you can show me your fastest start this time.
- 🌸 I need your eyes on me so you don't miss what's next—can you do that?
- 🌸 Show me how strong you can pedal this round.
- 🌸 Let's try that drill again and see if we can make it even smoother.
- 🌸 Can you help me show the others how to do this?
- 🌸 When you're ready, I want to see your best effort
- 🌸 I like the energy you have—let's put it into this drill.
- 🌸 Can you beat your last lap time if you really focus?
- 🌸 Take a deep breath, then get ready to give it your best.
- 🌸 Eyes up—let's make this one count!
- 🌸 I know you can do this—want to prove me right?
- 🌸 Let's finish strong together.

Positive Phrases at End of Practice or Race

Coaches set the tone for the behavior of athletes and families. Respect must always be demonstrated.

- 🌟 Great job giving it your all today
- 🌟 I saw how hard you worked—keep it up
- 🌟 You're improving every time you get on the track
- 🌟 I'm proud of the effort you put in
- 🌟 You showed great teamwork and kindness today
- 🌟 Your focus really made a difference out there
- 🌟 Every lap you ride makes you stronger
- 🌟 Way to stick with it, even when it was tough
- 🌟 I like how you encouraged your teammates
- 🌟 You should feel proud of the effort you gave

Yes Answer Questions for Athletes

Ask your student athletes questions that give them the ability to give positive answers about themselves. Then confirm you agree with them.

- 🌟 Did you give your best effort today? I saw you giving full effort.
- 🌟 Do you feel stronger after that practice? You looked faster today.
- 🌟 Are you proud of your hard work on track today? I'm proud of you.
- 🌟 Did you learn something new today? Tell me about it.
- 🌟 Do you think your hard work is paying off? I can see it paying off.
- 🌟 Are you ready to take on the next challenge? I think you are ready.
- 🌟 Do you feel good knowing you encouraged your teammates?

How to Handle a Difficult Athlete

Let's be clear that a difficult athlete doesn't include children learning at their own pace. Just because they aren't able to make a correction or learn a new skill, doesn't make them a difficult athlete. We are talking about athletes that are impacting other children in a negative way during practice.

Start with a Private Conversation

- 🌟 Pull the athlete aside quietly so they don't feel embarrassed in front of peers.
- 🌟 Use "I" statements instead of blame:
 - *"I need you to look at me so I know you understand the next step."*
 - *"I feel distracted when the group isn't paying attention, and I want us all to stay safe."*
 - *"I need everyone's focus so we can move to the next drill."*
 - *"I need you to stay in the drill so you can keep improving."*
 - *"I feel concerned when I see you not following directions, because safety is important."*
 - *"I need respectful words from everyone so practice stays positive."*
 - *"I get worried when teammates aren't supporting each other, because teamwork matters."*
 - *"I like how focused you were earlier, and I'd love to see that again right now."*
 - *"I'm proud when I see you encourage your teammates."*

The formula to remember is:

"I feel / I notice / I need" + the behavior + the reason.

- 🌟 Keep it short, calm, and respectful.

Offer Clear Expectations and One More Chance

- 🌟 Be specific about what needs to change.
 - *"When I'm giving instructions, I need you listening. If not, you'll need to sit out for a bit."*
- 🌟 Give them one clear opportunity to correct their behavior.

Use a Short, Neutral Break (Time-Out / Sit-Out)

- ✿ If the behavior continues, remove them from the drill or practice moment for a short break.
- ✿ Avoid lectures—simply state: *“Take a seat for one round, and you can try again next time.”*
- ✿ This gives them a reset without shaming.

Involve Parents (If Needed)

- ✿ If behavior is repeated or disruptive over multiple practices, talk with the athlete’s parents.
- ✿ Keep the tone solution-focused:
 - *“I want your child to succeed. Here’s what I’m seeing, and here’s how we can help them refocus.”*

Use League/Team Standards

- ✿ Reference the team’s **Code of Conduct** so expectations are consistent across all coaches.
- ✿ Escalation should never feel personal—it’s about protecting the learning environment for everyone.

Final Escalation: Temporary Suspension

- ✿ If the behavior doesn’t improve after multiple interventions, the athlete may need to sit out an entire practice or event. The site Head Coach must make this determination.
- ✿ This step should always involve parents and follow the league’s disciplinary policies.
- ✿ Reinforce that the door is always open for them to return with a fresh start.

Coach Acknowledgment and Signature

Every coach must sign and agree to use a positive approach to coaching and/or interacting with other athletes on the team.

Coach Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____