

Whenever I would start a new season, with new players, I would always start with a little saying:

*Softball (or basketball, or whatever sports we are in) is a game.*

*Games are fun.*

*Are we having fun?*

So many times, as the players we coach get older, we lose focus on making the sport fun. We are too wrapped up in “getting the work in” that make practices feel like work and we take all the fun out of the sport. As the players get older, I’ve seen too many players lose the luster in their eyes. Players go through the motions and lose their fire. All because the sport isn’t fun anymore. Whether it’s the pressure they put on themselves, or pressure they get from family or coaches. Or, quite possibly, all of the above.

As coaches, we need to remember that practices shouldn’t be all work and no play. They should still be fun, regardless of age. In our practices, we would always try to incorporate some sort of competitions in our practices in order to keep things loose and fun. Everyone who plays loves to compete. Working to keep things light, but also most competition brings out an extra level of focus in your players. Players that feel like practice is going to be a grind will look for excuses not to come to practices.

As I matured as a coach, I found more ways to make practices more fun. Once practices became more fun, I found out I didn’t have to beg and plead with players to come to practices, and I didn’t have to listen to lame excuses as to why they weren’t available to come to practice. The last couple of years, I had girls showing up early, and getting the work that they needed to get in early or staying late to get in extra work. All because practices were more fun, and they enjoyed being with their teammates.

So, coaches, the main question is if you are a fun sucker, or a fun creator. The choice is clear. Have fun and enjoy the ride.