Whether you are a player, coach, or parent, an effective, well-attended practice is centered on communication.

From letting the players know what is expected during practice; to informing parents on when, where, and for how long your team is practicing, it is the coaching staff’s task to keep everyone informed.

Coaches who come to practice with a plan, increase their ability to clearly convey their team goals and engage their players. If you’re using a tempered and balanced approach, your players will likely respond by working hard, not pouting after mistakes, and accepting the coaching you are providing.

To assist in maximizing practice time, coaches need to exercise their communications skills throughout each week of the season.

1. During the preseason, fast-moving stations allow a number of drills to be completed at the same time. Quality repetitions will grow confidence and improve the team’s overall skill level. It is very important to not have kids sitting around. Maximize your time, and avoid just taking infield practice, hitting to one kid at a time with the other 13 kids doing nothing. Use your coaching and support staff to increase the activity of your players during practice.

1. Each week, plan the practice schedule with your coaches and tell your players about what they can expect in the days ahead. Developing targeted skill practices (e.g. - defense, hitting, pitching); or covering several aspects of the game in a single practice are productive, but make sure to be effective with your time management. Be aware of practice information overload, and do not overwhelm the players with too many situations and scenarios.

1. A great way to keeping players engaged is to let them pick a skill or drill to work on toward the end of practice. By giving the players a voice in practice creates a sense of ownership for them. If you let the team know that the last segment of practice belongs to them, the motivation and focus throughout will be greatly enhanced.