



MONTH OF OCTOBER
APPRECIATE YOUR VOLUNTEER COACHES

from

VARA Youth Coordinator, Alex Krebs



KILLINGTON MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

Thanks to KMS, this month's sponsor, click the logo to find out about their upcoming camps and Boost Program!

Happy October! Volunteers, Volunteers, Volunteers, thank you so much for your hard work and for your commitment to Vermont ski racing. Your time and care for the children you work with is greatly appreciated. Sometimes it may take a reminder here and there for parents to keep perspective and also to help them understand that the work you do in helping their child, the sport and the club they are involved with is vital to their skier's success. I hope that within the VARA community we all remember the excellence that our volunteers bring to ski racing in Vermont.

Julie Woodworth - VARA Executive Director

VOLUNTEER COACHES



One of the most underrated positions in our country is that of a volunteer youth sports coach. It is a job that parents sometimes take for granted and at times need to be reminded to give him/her the gratitude they so deserve. Unless a coach shows malice towards a child, is generally not a good person, or doesn't seem committed, parents should feel fortunate that there are people that are willing to lend their efforts and valuable time. It is not the average person that has the ability to teach children about a sport, prepare them to play in a game, and in turn use sports as a vehicle to teach kids about life lessons.

There seem to be two main reasons volunteer coaches stop coaching. One, there comes a point where they want to be on the other side for a change and "just" be the parent cheering in the stands and two, it becomes tiring and frustrating dealing with complaints, excessive advice or lack of adherence to team rules.

It is a good idea to remember the time and commitment the coach is giving to provide a positive sports experience for the children they are working with. It may be best for parents to choose the role as a supporter for the team and the coaches. A coach makes a tremendous commitment in working with young athletes. **Entering the season with a mindset of gratitude and support is a great way to start the year off.**

Below are 4 things parents may want to remember when joining a team or program with volunteer coaches.

1. BEING ON TIME IS IMPORTANT

People have a lot going on these days but so do the parents that volunteer to coach. They're not only making time to coach your child, but they are putting in time studying the rules, preparing for

practice, sending out schedules, etc. Be supportive of the coach rules and try and be on time, it helps to keep the entire group on track for the training day.

2. BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE COACH

Children are sponges when it comes to absorbing comments and information. When they are receiving input from many different people it can become overwhelming and counter productive. Supporting the coaches' efforts may be much more productive for the children rather than adding to the commentary or giving feedback that may be confusing.

3. BE SERIOUS ABOUT THE COMMITMENT

Showing up for a practice is important not only for the athlete but also for the coach and team. It can be frustrating for your child as well as for the rest of the group to be a "once in a while" participant. It is difficult to develop friendships and a rapport with the coach without a commitment to attendance. In addition, proper development is challenged when practices are missed.

4. COMMUNICATE

It takes thirty-seconds to send an email or text to tell your coach your child is going to miss a practice or a race. It takes a lot more time than that for coaches to prepare for their day with the kids. A little bit of forethought and communication can save the coach and the team a lot of time trying to figure out where everyone is.

Please be considerate of the volunteer and, all coaches time and effort given to help develop proficient ski racers, kids of good character and respectful youngsters. A positive contribution a parent can make is to remind your child of what their coaches sacrifice to teach them youth sports.

- Tips are an edited version from [Alex Flanagan](#).

Here is a link to a letter to parents from a volunteer coach. [Link here](#)



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Please visit the [VARA Youth Coordinator Page](#) on the [VARA](#) site.