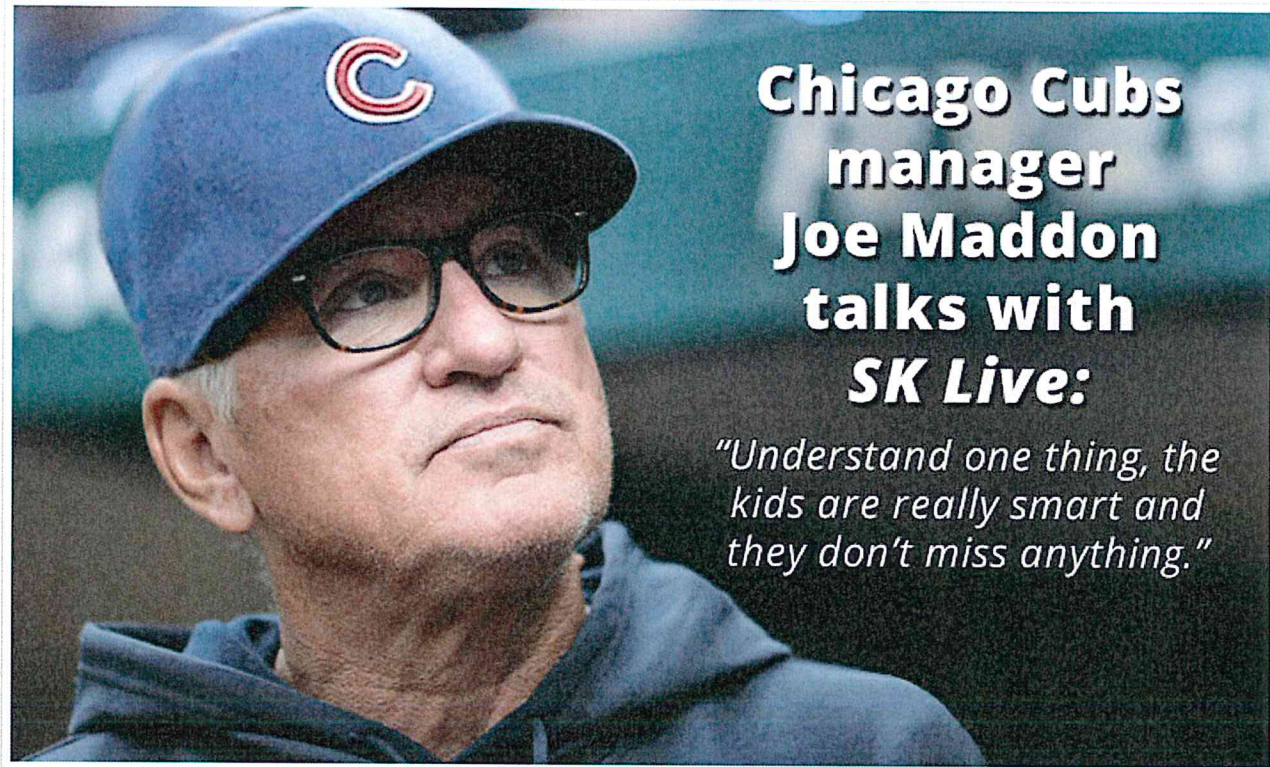


For Coaches



Chicago Cubs manager Joe Maddon talks with *SK Live*:

"Understand one thing, the kids are really smart and they don't miss anything."

All eyes are on YOU

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By Greg Bach

Listen up coaches: you're being watched *very* closely.

That's right, every word you utter and every movement you make is observed and dissected by your players all season long.

"Understand one thing, the kids are really smart and they don't miss anything," first-year Chicago Cubs manager Joe Maddon told *SK Live*. "They will notice your good body language, your bad body language and your minor angry moment that you thought had maybe been overlooked that just may impact them way more than you ever thought it would."

So that puts a premium on maintaining a calm demeanor at all times; speaking to kids in a positive manner; and really being aware of your body language and the messages you are sending to your players.

Keep these tips in mind from Maddon, the two-time American League Manager of the Year during his tenure with Tampa Bay, to make sure you aren't sending negative vibes to your players without even realizing it.

WATCH YOUR WORDS AND HOW YOU SAY THEM

“Really be aware of what you are going to say in advance and be careful,” Maddon advises. “Honesty without compassion really does equal cruelty at the end of the day. So know what you’re saying and how you’re saying it in advance – because the kids don’t miss anything.”

RELAX

“It’s how you talk to them,” says Maddon, one of only two active managers to guide teams to four straight 90-plus win seasons. “If I want to talk to them in a stressful, uptight manner the kids are going to reflect the same thing, and if I choose to not do it that way they probably won’t. The players should reflect the personality of your manager or coaching staff.”

PUSH POSITIVE MESSAGES

“If you’re talking about baseball for instance, you’re going to have a lot of failure in this game and you have to be able to stay positive with your kids, even through those negative moments where they do fail a bit so that they want to keep coming back for more,” Maddon says. “When it becomes too negative or oppressive all of a sudden they’re going to shy away from this and not want to practice, not want to show up and not want to play with such verve.”

DON’T DRAIN THE FUN

“Keep the fun in it,” Maddon says. “I think sometimes, and I don’t know why, people tend to want to subtract the fun. It’s a game; at the end of the day it is a game so keep it fun for the kids.”

KEEP IT LIGHT

“If you have an uptight kid a lot of times it’s because of what either he gets at home or the message that’s being brought to him by the coach,” Maddon says. “So lighten it up. Try to get this kid to relax, have fun with what he’s doing and believe that positive results are going to follow because too many times when a kid does poorly he’s going to start anticipating poor again and that’s a bad thing. You have to be able to talk them through that moment, stay supportive with it and keep moving it in a positive direction.”