

What Sort Of Coach Are You?

The Role of a Coach

As a team coach you can influence your player's:

- * performance level
- * enjoyment of sport
- * motivation
- * moral and social values

A coach who is knowledgeable, patient and understanding will assist players to improve their performance. Improvement in performance of the players must be used to assess the relative value of a coach, but sometimes this is not the whole story. Coaching often means more than improving a player's performance.

The Coach and Knowledge

Before a coach can begin, the first requirement is knowledge. To ensure planning, proper organisation, skill analysis and effective feedback, a coach must know about coaching. This usually comes from learning details either through books or practical assistance from those who already have the necessary knowledge.

Once knowledge has been obtained, coaches must ensure that they use this knowledge in the correct manner. Feedback to players in a simple and easily-understood language will be far more beneficial than complex and detailed instructions.

The Coach and Patience

After the feedback stage, coaches must be patient. It is often forgotten that coaches must be understanding and aware of player's needs, so that improvement will occur within the limits of the player's abilities and desires. This aspect is usually the cause of coaching failure. That is, the coach who tries to impart too much pressure on average players usually expecting too much in a short time, will take away much of the pleasure from training or playing.

The Coach and Fun

Coaches should remember that sport is meant to be fun. For most of us sport provides a form of satisfaction through participation.

The Coach as a Motivator

Coaches of individual performers must be aware of the driving reasons behind

the participant's involvement. Players usually become attached to a sport for one or more of the following reasons:

Achievement - the desire for improvement

Affiliation - the desire for friendly associations

Sensation - the desire for the stimulating effect

Self-direction - the desire to control one's direction.

As a good motivator, the coach chooses the line between the physical and emotional needs of the athlete. For team coaches this problem becomes more difficult because of the varying needs of each of the members in the team.

Coaches must always try to channel both the physical and emotional forces in the same, desired direction. Some ways in which a coach can assist players to achieve their needs are:

- * The setting of realistic goals
- * Identification and praising of individual improvements
- * Avoid the mis-matching of players
- * Encourage and assist with team outings
- * Ensure variety
- * Allow players to make individual and group decisions

The Coach and Social Attitudes

Because the coach may have lasting and important influences on players, both in their social and moral attitudes, effective coaches ensure appropriate team standards are set and met in on-field and off-field behaviour. Sport in itself will do much to mould and adjust the character of participants however, a positive and sportsman-like approach by the coach will usually provide long-term benefits to the individuals.

Any coach who supports winning at all costs and who offers cheating and often-witnessed aggressive attitudes as alternatives to "good sports", shows little respect for society in general and little thought for the character development of players.

Coaches should provide situations where players experience the attitudes expected in our society. Good sportsmanship and friendly, competitive associations will enhance performance.

The Coach and The Image

One aspect of coaching which is often overlooked by coaches is the effect the coach has on individuals concerning:

Politeness

- * Dress standards
- * Verbal abuse and swearing
- * General mis-behaviour

An effective coach should always set the example for the players, particularly for younger children. Coaches should never try to improve performance through intimidation or aggressive remarks.

Coaching Assets Once you have the knowledge of the game, and general coaching methods, the coach must use these in the practical art of improving performance. Without knowledge, nothing can be provided to the players. Once a coach has the knowledge, the important thing is to allow one's natural personality to over-ride the way in which the messages are passed to the players.

Knowledge can be learnt and lost. It can be re-learned and amended. However, our personality has been developed over many years and will take just as many to change.