BASICS OF COACHING

Posted by STLCoach - 30 Jun 2010 04:21

PART 2
CHOOSING YOUR STYLE OF COACHING

A coaching style has to reflect your personality. It is an extension of your personality. You must have a good idea of what kind of person you are and what type of person are you aspiring to be. You must know yourself - are you uptight? flexible? anal? fun-loving? serious? cynical?,etc.

The key is to identify a style that will best transfer information from coach to player. One must have flexibility to adapt to athletes since after a certain point in their development it is very difficult to change them.

The most often described styles of coaching are: (from Successful Coaching, Martens, 1990, pp.11-16)

1. COMMAND – In the command style of coaching, the coach makes all the decisions. The role of the athlete is to respond to the coach's commands. The assumption underlying this approach is that because the coach has knowledge and experience, it is his or her role to tell the athlete what to do. The athlete's role is to listen, to absorb, and to comply.

2. SUBMISSIVE – In the submissive style, coaches make as few decisions as possible. It's a "throw-out-the-ball-and-have-a-good-time-approach." The coach provides little instruction, provides minimal guidance in organizing activities, and resolves discipline problems only when absolutely necessary.

3. COOPERATIVE – In the cooperative style, coaches share decision making with athletes. This is an adaptable and pliable style that puts the coach in the role of a facilitator, conductor and choreographer. This style empowers athletes to be the best that they can be.

CREATING & ESTABLISHING YOUR COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Just as in determining your style of coaching, choosing a Coaching Philosophy will require that you know yourself and that you go through a series of written exercises that will help you ascertain this.

The best way to identify your coaching philosophy is to produce a one page typed document that will describe it. This can then be handed out to athletes, parents, administrators, etc. Note – this one page coaching philosophy should be looked at, modified, added to, deleted from, etc. every coaching season. It is a "living document." You will constantly be growing both as a person and as a coach, therefore your life and athletic experiences will "tweak" and modify your written philosophy. Your written philosophy will be a "guided-missile" that will "self-correct" as you mature as a coach.

A series of questions are listed below. These are meant to get you to reflect and determine what is important and not important to you as a person and as a coach. Answer these in an outline or text format. Then prepare your own one page coaching philosophy (see Action Plan below).

LIFE IN GENERAL:

What is important to you?

Prioritize the following: job, hobbies, family, friends, religion, health, values, money, etc.

What is not important to you?

What are you willing to compromise?

What will you never compromise?

What would you like to have written as your epitaph?

What are you willing to die for?

What -?

COACHING:

What coaches do you admire? Why? What coaches would you like to (emulate? What parts of their styles or philosophies would you like to copy?

What are the idealistic and guiding principles in your coaching?

What one or two principles best represent your coaching? What are two or three principles that you always stress?

How are these terms/phrases defined in your philosophy?

* should you have fun in practice? on game day?

* competition
* winning vs. losing
* when would you bench a player?
* do you intend to teach “life skills” as a coach?
* positive vs. negative reinforcement

Do you have uncompromising principles in regard to your coaching?

* effort
* competitiveness
* punctuality
* ethics/morals
* concept of team
* etc.

SOME FAVORITE QUOTES

What quotes have been important in your life? In your coaching?

You can choose one or two to put into your philosophy.

ACTION PLAN

* Answer the following statements/questions: 1) List the top three priorities in your life; 2) What would you never compromise? 3) List your top three coaching priorities; 4)If you play on my team expect (or

you will learn, or I will stress, etc.) the following - - list 2 to 3 points; 5) What is your favorite quote on life in general? 6) What is your favorite coaching or sports quote?

* In addition, write down your random ideas and thoughts – put them in an outline or text format

* Construct a short biographical sketch (3 to 4 lines) – this will appear at the top or bottom of your one typed page “Coaching Philosophy.”

* File all of your work in a folder or drawer

* Review in 2-3 days; add to and delete

* Put together a new outline of these notes

* File them once again

* Review in one week

* Put ideas on one typed page

* Write and rewrite until satisfied

Your goal is to have a final product goal that is one typed page (including your 3-4 line biographical sketch).

Your “Coaching Philosophy” can be handed out to your team, team parents, supervisors, search committee in an application packet or during your interview, etc.

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Re:BASICS OF COACHING

Posted by STLCoach - 30 Jun 2010 04:24

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PART 3

Here is a list of some ideas to prepare for before the season starts.

* Motivation – define, how best to motivate
* Communication
* Positive vs. negative reinforcement
* Establishing Team Rules
* Components of Being the Best _____ Player
* Goal Setting
* Individual Meetings with player – when? where? how often? content? permanent record (form)?
* Team meetings
* Parent meetings – First – beginning of year (season) meeting; individual parent meetings
* Responsibilities of a coach – What a coach controls
* Assessing and evaluating athletes – tryouts, evaluation tools
* Game Day – Game and match Management
* Time Outs
* Staff hiring; staff job descriptions
* Time Management – general and specific to coaching

* Yearly and seasonal planning
* Daily Planner
* Practice – components, planning, execution – “how to run a practice”
* Drills – theory, development, “drill guideline outline”
* How best to teach skills/techniques
* How best to teach strategies/tactics
* Feedback
* Team notebooks
* Use of evaluation tools, statistics
* Use of video in game/match situations; in practice
* Empowering your athletes – teach them self-management skills (goal setting; monitoring goals; charts; self-rewards, etc.)
* Team Building – developing the “team” concept
* Mental training – “sports psychology”
* Differences in coaching boys vs girls & men vs. women
* Difference in coaching at various levels – recreation, elementary school, middle school, high school, elite clubs, college, national teams, professional teams.
* Differences in coaching at various age groups
* Self Evaluation/Peer Evaluation
* Administration & organization
* Coaching Bibliography & References
* Writing Behavioral Objectives
* Behavioral Interactions – checklist coaches interaction with team in practice & game/match
* Specialization – why? at what age group and/or level?

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BASICS OF COACHING pt 4

Posted by STLCoach - 01 Jul 2010 04:50

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Today's newsletter is the last in a series of four on the basics of coaching.

VISION/PHILOSOPHY/GOALS OF COACHING KIDS, TEENAGERS & YOUNG ADULTS

* It’s for the kids! Kids are the most important

* Kids/Children’s overall health and safety are top priorities

* Promotes maintenance of physical activity for lifelong leisure and fitness skills

* Overall philosophy

1. Teach skills and skill development
2. Develop self esteem, feel worthy
3. Have fun
4. Foster healthy parent-child and adult-child relationships
5. Socialization
6. Put forth an “effort to win”
7. Learn life long fitness and sports leisure skills

* Outcomes for kids/children/teenagers

1. Learn skills – get better, “more-skilled”
2. Feel good (develop positive self-concept)
3. Have fun

* This is a joint effort of coach + child + parent

* Practice and competition environment is safe

1. Physically – all surroundings are “accident proofed”; progressions use the right equipment (example - size and weight of ball, etc.); the sequencing of skill acquisition does not include unsafe practices (example - heading a soccer ball at very young age); there are established routines for examining the environment for injury prevention.
2. Emotionally – kids feel good about themselves – self esteem, self efficacy; good opinions and/or complimentary comments are expressed when describing/seeing overall program; program is accepted by others (peers, families, coaches, etc.); skill progressions and practices are conducted in an environment prepared/arranged for success.

* Proper placement of kid/child in a program and/or league

1. Recreation vs. Elite Club
2. Playing up in age
3. Girls playing with boys; boys playing with girls
4. Playing time

* Specialization

1. At what age
2. At what level
3. Possible solution – playing multiple or all positions until age 13 or 14

* Participation/playing multiple sports

1. “Pro” – generalization of skills, cross training, development of different skill sets, development of different muscle groups, etc.
2. “Con” – time commitment (over scheduling), burnout, “jack of all trades and master of none” syndrome, etc.

* Educating parents and kids/children the reality of competing and making teams at higher levels

1. High School Varsity
2. College Varsity (less than 1% of all who play age group/youth sport)
3. College Scholarships
4. Professional, National Teams & Olympics (less than .1% of all who play college)

* Promotion of Fitness and Life Long Leisure Skills

* Professional Sport may be incompatible with good health

1. Sedentary spectator behavior in stadium and in front of television – “couch potato”

2. Increased ingestion of food – high in fat (spectator)
3. Increased ingestion of alcohol (spectator)
4. Violence in Pro Sports
5. Professional athletes as improper role models

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BASICS: Discipline problems? Not any more!

Posted by STLCoach - 10 Jul 2010 03:09

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Discipline problems? Not any more!
What is 'misbehaviour'?

Don't make the mistake of confusing immature behaviour with misbehaviour. Children don't turn up to training sessions to study soccer. They want to kick a ball, chat with their friends and generally have what they think is fun.

So you have to allow them to let off steam now and then. That's not misbehaviour, it's natural. But they, and you, need to know where the dividing line is between normal childish behaviour and misbehaviour.

A lot depends on your attitude and expectations

A coach who demands eight-year-old children should listen to them 100% of the time is definitely going to get frustrated and anxious. Whereas, a coach who wants to be liked by their players is going to worry that they are not going to be liked when they need to correct poor behaviour.

And a coach who feels they need to control players will worry when they see them having a bit of innocent, age-appropriate fun. These feelings of worry and frustration may well result in a coach making hasty decisions when confronted by behaviour they do not want to see.

So it's important to manage expectations. Accept that sometimes, kids will be kids. Coach them with a smile on your face, not a frown.

Good planning is vital

1. Age appropriate activities
Trying to make six-year-olds do things more appropriate to 12-year-olds (and vice versa) is guaranteed to create frustration among your players and cause you a lot of stress. You need to challenge the more experienced players, but you must also make certain all your players have the necessary core skills before moving on to more complicated moves and tactics.

It's silly, for example, to try to teach the wall pass to children who can't pass the ball accurately over a short distance. You might think that's obvious, but many coaches seem to think they must be teaching their players relatively advanced skills by week two of their training programme.

Take your time and make sure all your players are proficient in basic ball skills.

2. Standing in lines
Nothing will likely result in young soccer players turning off as using drills that involve them standing in lines. There are no lines in matches so there shouldn't be any lines in training. Use small-sided games (SSGs) instead. There are lots of examples on the footy4kids website.

You must agree ground rules

You can't expect children to obey rules if.

They don't know what they are.
They don't understand why they have to obey them.
They are imposed without any discussion.
Discuss the need for rules and try to make them consistent with the aims of the team.

But you don't need a rule book!

Soccer practices are not supposed to be run like a prison camp. Two or three carefully thought out and agreed rules are more than enough.

Make the punishment fit the crime

You also have to agree what the 'punishment' is for breaking the rules. Ask the players what they think the punishment should be but don't be surprised if they come up with some pretty extreme ideas!

For a first offence, a quiet word might be enough. For a second offence, you may wish to remove the child from the group. Don't make a big deal out of it. Just ask them to stand next to you or with an assistant until they feel able to join in properly again.

For more serious 'offences' I exclude players from the end of session/match (scrimmage), or give them less playing time in the next match.

You can justify this by explaining that as they aren't working as hard as the others in training, players will have to 'carry' them in matches and that's not fair. Also, players who have been paying attention need to practise what they've learned in the match. But the ones who weren't listening, don't need to.

Coaching tip: If your players persist in talking while you're talking, be silent and wait until they stop. Usually, peer pressure will prevail and the offenders will be told to 'shut up' by their team mates. If this doesn't work, walk away. Tell them it's their team, not yours, and if they want to chat instead of work then that's okay. But you won't waste your time listening to them.

The carrot is more effective than the stick

Another mistake some coaches make is to punish but never reward. When a player, or players, make an effort to master a skill, tell them how pleased you are. But you must be sincere - children see through false flattery very easily.

Have the parents on your side

Parents are often viewed as a necessary evil useful for fetching children to practice and games, and that's about it. But having parents on your side is critical to maintaining good discipline.

Explain the rules you've agreed with your players and ask for the parents' support if you have to enforce them. A quiet word with a misbehaving player that you're 'going to have to have a word with mom' is usually very effective.

Finally, if you follow these guidelines and your children still have days when they just won't listen to you, reflect on what you might have done wrong but don't beat yourself up over it. Youth soccer coaching is

not meant to be easy.

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Re:BASICS OF COACHING

Posted by STLCoach - 28 Jul 2010 01:21

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Coaching Education: The Case for Some Orthodoxy
By Mike Singleton

In a recent column by Soccer America's Paul Gardner, the author maligned orthodoxy and posited that curricula are where "problems start." If taken to the extreme, these points have some validity, however, when thrown into the context of coaching education in our country they prove somewhat amiss.

Soccer in this country is supported by millions of volunteers, many of whom who have no soccer experience and end up coaching simply because they were the last person to step backward when a club administrator told parents that if they could not find a coach their child would not have a place to play.

What is this goodhearted yet fearful volunteer to do when faced with 12 bubbling 6-year-olds or 8-year-olds? Where does this volunteer gain advice, knowledge, and confidence? Through coaching courses and curricula, this coach can find these needed supports.

What would this class and curricula say?

Whether it be with an English accent, a New York accent, or a Brazilian one, the message would be “let the game be the greatest teacher.” This voice may not sound the same and likely is not, but the message does need to be the same.

Novice coaches need to be warned of forcing younger players into locked positions, always telling players to pass t he ball, asking players to kick the ball out of bounds whenever under pressure in the defense end and telling defenders never to cross the halfway line.

These are a handful of examples of many coaching mistakes made every day throughout this country and we need courses and curricula to help minimize the number of people coaching in this manner. Without coaching eductation courses we may be shocked to see how many are trying to teach 8-year-olds how to play in a zonal back four!

This message needs to tell young children to discover new ways to manipulate the ball, to take risks, and to teach us a new thing whenever they can. Whether this voice is gruff, deep, perky or soft, this message needs be the same and this message need be concise and clear as well.

Coaching education in this country has taken amazing steps over the years, and through the collaborative work of coaches, doctors, kinesiologists and psychologists, the curricula for our nati onal courses are top notch.

We encourage coaches to allow players to problem solve and use guided discovery to help them come to solutions for the problems the game presents. Not only do we try to give inexperienced coaches insight into how to make a pass, with all surfaces of the foot, but we encourage them to ask players to determine when different methods should be applied.

This is crucial in skill development, not just technical development. Introducing coaches to the principles of play and to the importance of 1v1 and 2v1 and 2v2 and so on are vital components of our lower level courses. In these areas, I pray for orthodoxy!

Coaching has taken on more than the soccer X's and O's these days and courses include learning theory, understanding varying methods of communication, being sensitive to childhood developmental issues and many topics one would not typically think are in a coaching course.

This is because one voice does not suffice. We have to see how to connect with different players at different times. We have to understand how individuals learn best and at what times they accept coaching optimally.

True, we do not want every player playing the same way, but there are fundamental principles of quality coaching that need to be the same. Whether a child is in San Diego or Boston, I would hope they are exposed to the points made above. I hope they are not told there is only one way to do things and I hope they are allowed to make mistakes. I hope they are encouraged to be great in whatever way and accent works for them best. And yes, some English ones may be best in some circumstances.

With the new added attention that U.S. Soccer is putting on younger age players my optimism is peaked. Conversations such as the one previously started and now continued need be commonplace.

With added attention to information such as this we can all help move this game forwar d. Taking a page from these courses it is time for us to learn from our mistakes, to test out different techniques at different times, and to problem solve.

(Mike Singleton is the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association's Head State Coach and Excecutive Director. He is a Region I ODP Senior Staff Coach and a U.S. Soccer and US Youth Soccer National Staff Coach.)

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BASICS OF COACHING-DEFENDING

Posted by STLCoach - 05 Aug 2010 03:44

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It's time to learn how to defend!
Surrounding an opposition attacker with most of your team is a pretty effective defensive tactic when your players are four, five or six years of age.

But as players get older, and a little wiser, it becomes less effective. A defender who used to win 95% of tackles by simply running at an attacker and taking the ball by force, suddenly finds the ball is being passed around them and into the back of the net.

If this is happening to your defenders, you need to explain that a little more subtlety is required. It's also time to show them that they need to work together if they are to stop the other team from scoring.

Before moving on to the nuts and bolts of team defending, let's demystify the jargon.

First defender - The player on your team who is nearest to the opposition player with the ball (the ball carrier).
Second defender - The player on your team who is next nearest to the ball carrier.
Third defender - This is a bit of a misnomer. The third defender isn't one player, but all of your players

(apart from the first and second defender) who are between the ball carrier and your goal.
What does the first defender do?

The first defender's job is not to get the ball, but to to hold the attacker up until help arrives. They do this by putting their body between the ball and their goal, stopping the opposition ball carrier from progressing. This player is a 'one person' wall.

Some tips for the first defender

'Stay on the balls of your feet so you can move quickly in any direction.'
'Look at the ball, not the player.'
'Only tackle if the ball carrier loses control of the ball.'
'Try to move the ball carrier away from the centre of the pitch and towards the touch lines. He can't score from there.'
What does the second defender do?

The second defender works closely with the first defender. They should be positioned roughly between the ball carrier and the goal, but in a position that allows them to see the ball. The job of the second defender is to take over from the first defender if the ball carrier gets past.

The second defender needs to loudly tell the first defender that they are in position. This allows the first defender to get closer to the ball carrier and apply more pressure, safe in the knowledge that his team mate will take over if he is beaten.

What does the third defender do?

The job of the rest of your team - the 'third defender' - is two-fold.

They need to cover the danger areas. The places on the pitch where attackers shoot and score. For example, you would usually have one third defender on the edge of the penalty area and another near the penalty spot.
Your third defenders also need to watch the opposition players and try to cut off the passing channels. To stop them from getting the ball.
Finally, all of your players need to practice defending, not just the defenders. Get your whole team to understand the importance of working together to stop the opposition attacks and you will have taken a big step towards 'proper soccer'.

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