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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ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS AS COACH

Posted by STLCoach - 06 Oct 2010 03:11

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Today’s topic deals with asking the right questions as a coach.

Go out to almost any soccer field and listen to the coaches try to give the answers:

* “Get Wide”
* “Mark number 10”
* “Pass to the corner”
* “Set up a wall”
* “SHOOT!”

The feeling is by telling the players what to do it’s helping the players learn how to make decisions (at least this is some of their thoughts, others seem to feel their players are so stupid they can’t make any decisions for themselves).

Making decisions for players does NOT help them learn how to make decisions in the future. If anything, it stifles their decision making process.

Instead, we need to allow the players to learn to make these decisions on their own.. Short term, it

might help to tell them what to do but good coaches are looking at developing their players for long term growth.

This doesn't mean allowing the players to make the same mistakes over and over again. Allow them to make a mistake, see how they attempt to correct the mistake and then, if they keep making the same mistake over and over again, help them through the thought process so they can figure out the better solution.

While games are a great learning opportunity, there are other ways to work on this decision making. A very effective, yet very tedious method is through video. This is best done in small groups (1-5 players). Have them watch a game for a bit then suddenly turn the video off and have the players draw on a sheet of paper exactly where all 22 players on the field are located. It's rare to be able to see all 22 players at any given time on a video but this will challenge the players to really concentrate on not only what they see but also tendencies based on previous situations on the field. Have the players compare their locations to the others and see how close they are. If they can't "see" the field at all times (and this does include times when it's not visible) it will limit their ability to read the play. Next have them anticipate where the next two passes are going to be made. Again, this would be done by looking at space, seeing who is open, who isn't and also reading the individual abilities and tendencies of the players in the game. After each discusses their reasoning, then turn the video back on and see how close they were. Continue watching and then repeat the process. After doing this enough times, the players will start to be able to read plays and make decisions quicker. The objective is for them to eventually take what they are practicing in this static environment and apply in games. This is NOT a short term solution as it has to be done over and over until the players (and coaches) really get good at this. If you try to do this with large groups, some will lose focus and will eventually bring the rest down with them. It's best to start small and slowly increase the size of the groups. As far as the videos are concerned, you can do this with different levels. Sometimes, use high level professional teams to see what could/should be done at that level. Other times, use video of the team you are coaching or of the opponents to see it applied at a more realistic level for the players.

Another way to work on this is through full field scrimmages. Have the team scrimmage with the understanding that occasionally you will call "freeze" and all players must stop right where they are. Call on a player and that player must close their eyes and tell you where all players are located. Then have a discussion regarding options in that given situation. Instead of telling the player with the ball what to do, have that player discuss their options and determine what is best in that situation. Allow for comments from other players but don't allow it to be too drawn out that players lose focus/interest. Do this for different situations with different players. Keep in mind, this isn't exciting for the players so don't do for an extended period of time. Instead, do for short periods of time but do frequently. Follow this up with something quick moving and fun for the players so they don't see it as punishment.

These processes described above involve a lot of asking of questions as opposed to the giving of answers. It takes time, patience and planning but long term, it's worth the effort. Some coaches will never do this because telling the players what to do is sometimes easier and might get better results short term. I realize there are coaches out there who feel the pressure to "win now" and as such will never do this but I don't worry too much about those coaches because their need to "win now" short term will result in them failing long term.

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