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Applied Sport Psychology

Motivation, Feedback and Goal Setting for your Athletes

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- **Why discuss these topics?**
- Firstly there is concern with trying to foster long term motivation in sport.
- A high proportion of adults lead a sedentary life and research has shown that when children have positive experiences with sport when they are young, they will be more likely to be active adults



- Secondly, there is a desire by coaches and parents to set the stage for athletic excellence.
- Long term perspective
- Many talented children seem to suffer the effects of burnout before they have the opportunity to develop their potential ability



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How can we encourage athletes to try different sports, to work hard when they play, to enjoy their sports and have positive experiences?



- The aim of this session is to educate on how to use applied psychology (positive reinforcement and correct motivational techniques) for long term athletic motivation



Motivating Your Athletes (and Yourself)

Motivate Yourself First

How Do You Expect to Motivate Others If You Can't Motivate Yourself First?

Motivation is Contagious

Focused Motivation

You Have to Control The Things YOU Have
Control Over -- Nothing Else



Activity

A Quick Check of YOUR Motivation...

Ask the coach beside you

Why Did You Play Sports?

Why Do You Coach?



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*Always Remember...Our Players Come To Us
Already Highly Motivated*

Therefore...

**It's Our Job To Maintain Our Players'
Natural Motivation To Play Our Sport**

The \$1,000,000 Question Is ...

**What Can We, As Coaches, Do To Help Our
Players Maintain Their Natural Motivation For
Sport?**



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*Always Remember...Our Players Come To
Us Already Highly Motivated*

The \$1,000,000 Answer Is ...

**We Need To Learn Some Of The
Basic Principles Of Motivation and
Feedback**



Feedback - A Positive Approach to Coaching

- **The primary function of a coach is to somehow alter existing sporting behavior - could be a technique, tactics, skills or behaviour**
- **We, as coaches, must make a conscious decision as to whether we will use a POSITIVE or NEGATIVE approach when we attempt to make these changes**



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Using a Negative Approach (shouting, fear, negative feedback) to Change Behavior

One Single “Advantage”...

It often works -- can eliminate undesirable behavior. But only in the short run and only when we are present and only when we're willing to punish



Using a Negative Approach to Change Behavior

Disadvantages (page 1)

- Can be very unpleasant -- reduce enjoyment and **MOTIVATION** (may increase likelihood of athletes quitting the team)
- Increases **ANXIETY** (and error rate)
- Produces “fear of failure”



*Using a Negative Approach
to Change Behavior*

Disadvantages (page 2)

- **Reduces “risk-taking”**
- **Can actually reinforce some undesirable behaviors and thus, actually increase your discipline problems**
- **Wastes valuable practice time**



Disadvantages (page 3)

- **We often use physical activity as punishment**
 - **Running Laps**
 - **Running Sprints**
 - **Push-ups**
 - **Sit-ups**



Why Would You Ever Use Physical Activity As Punishment?

You (like it or not) are a Physical Educator

One of the “benefits” of sport is that it promotes lifelong physical activity (health benefits)

Why would you ever use what you want to promote as punishment?



Negative and Positive Approaches to Changing Behavior

Major Assumption of Negative

**Approach to Coaching... We can
somehow “scare” a bad performance
right out of the athlete**



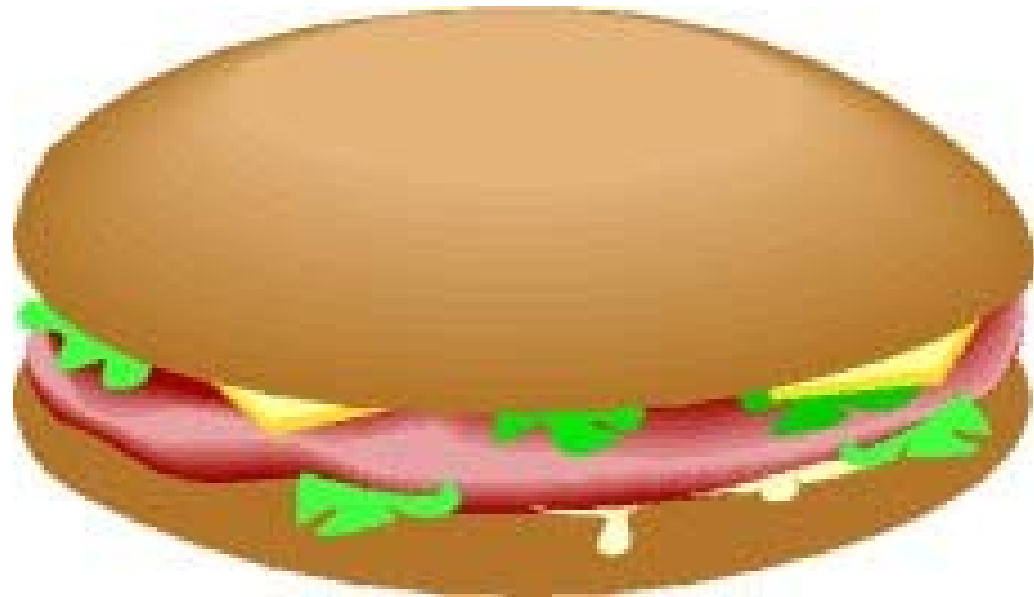
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*If Using a Negative Coaching Style Is
So Bad... How Do We Make Those
Necessary Changes?*

A Positive Approach: Using the “Feedback Sandwich”

*The Feedback Sandwich
(or “Big Mac” Attack)*

Reinforcement →
Instruction →
Encouragement →





Three Steps in The “Feedback Sandwich”

Step 1:

Start by reinforcing (praising) your athlete for ANYTHING he/she has done correctly -- regardless of how small



Step 1: Reinforce Something They've Done Right

Why? 1 min go!

List all benefits you can think of for starting your “error correction” process by reinforcing something your learners have done correctly.



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Step 1: Reinforce Something ***They've Done Right***

- **It forces you to recognize that most of the performance was actually done correctly**
- **It raises their self-esteem and confidence**
- **It reinforces correct elements of the performance**
- **It's the best way to get their attention**
- **Praise the Effort!**



Step 2: Provide Future-Oriented Instruction

Follow the positive reinforcement (now that you have their attention) with FUTURE-ORIENTED instruction

Don't dwell on the mistakes -- there is nothing the athlete can do to correct a mistake made in the past -- they can only change what they do in the future -- tell them what to do "next time"



Future-Oriented Instruction

- **Don't tell them what they already know -- tell them something they don't know 'You did receive the serve well'**
- **Don't simply tell them that they've made a mistake -- let them know why they made the mistake 'Your body was in the wrong position to receive the serve'**



Step 3: End with General Praise and Encouragement

Why?

- **Encourages them to try again**
- **Lets them know you have confidence in their ability to perform the skill correctly (*Do You Really?*)**
- **Non verbal communication**



Five Things You Can Do

To Motivate Your Athletes, Lets discuss this!

#1 You Can...

Identify why athletes participate and why they drop out

#2 You Can...

Identify what is motivating each of your athletes: PERFORMANCE or OUTCOME



#3 You Can...

Help your athletes set “S.M.A.R.T.” goals to improve their skills and learn new skills

#4 You Can...

Make their athletic experience enjoyable and exciting

#5 You Can...

Reduce competitive stress



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Guideline #1 What Does The Research Say?

Athletes Participate in Youth Sports...

- 1. To Have Fun***
- 2. To Improve Skills***
- 3. To Stay in Shape***
- 4. To Do Something They're "Good At"***
- 5. For the Excitement of Competition***



What Does The Research Say?

Athletes Participate in Youth Sports...

6. To Get Exercise

7. To Play as Part of a Team

8. For the Challenge of Competition

9. To Learn New Skills

10. To Win



What Does The Research Say?

Would you rather play on a regular basis for a poor team or “sit the bench” for a championship team?

Between 78-90% would rather play on a poor team than sit on the bench for the champs!



What Does The Research Say? ***Children Drop Out Because of...***

- ***Other interests***
- ***Work***
- ***Lack of interest***
- ***Did not play enough***
- ***Skills were not improving***
- ***Did not like the coach***



Guideline #2:

Help your athletes set “S.M.A.R.T.” goals to improve their skills and learn new skills

- **Help Everyone on Your Team Set Individual Goals**
- **As Goals Are Attained, They Help Motivate! Athletes See Themselves Improving**



- *Performance Goals*

Athletes judge success or failure based on their performance. Not whether they won or lost

- *Outcome Goals*

Athletes judge success or failure based on the outcome regardless how how they played



Guideline #3:

***Make the whole experience
enjoyable and exciting***

- Keep practices and games fun**
- Encourage athletes to be with, and make friends**
- Let all athletes participate**
- Avoid boredom by varying routines**



Guideline #3:

***Make the whole experience
enjoyable and exciting***

- **Use simple, active drills (no standing around) and short practices**
- **Use change of pace activities**
- **Allow athletes to try out leadership roles, new positions, and make decisions -- after all, it's their game isn't it?**



Guideline #4:

Reduce Competitive Stress

Competitive Stress Occurs:

- **When an athlete believes that a competitive situation, especially one perceived as highly important, threatens his/her self-esteem**
- **When an athlete believes that his/her capabilities are not good enough to meet the competitive demand**



Guideline #4:

Reduce Competitive Stress

Remember, YOU might be part of the “competitive demand”



Guideline #5:

***Teach An Appropriate
View of Success***

Encourage athletes to believe that real success means (notice the link to goal-setting):

- Improving oneself (which ultimately enables winning)**
- Who are your athletes comparing their performance to?**
- Achieving realistic goals for improvement (not just the outcomes of competitions)**



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Guideline #5:
***Teach An Appropriate
View of Success***

- **Giving one's best effort to improve at all times (the athlete can control effort but not outcome)**



Some Wisdom from John Wooden

- Wooden concluded his 40 years as a head coach and his 885-203 overall career win-loss record. A large part of that success was at UCLA. In 27 years as coach, his teams registered 620 wins, and only 147 losses while earning far more national honours than any other university.
- Under Wooden, UCLA won an unprecedented 10 NCAA championships, including seven consecutive (1966-73).



Some Final Thoughts From Coach Wooden...

Motivation:

“Enthusiasm brushes off on those with whom you come into contact, those you work with and for. You must have enthusiasm, especially if you’re a leader or if you wish to be a leader”



Some Final Thoughts From Coach Wooden...

Goals:

“I never mentioned victory or winning to my players. I never referred to ‘beating’ an opponent. Instead I constantly urged them to strive to do the best of which they were capable. That was the measurement I used -- not the final score”



Some Final Thoughts From Coach Wooden...

Motivation:

“I wasn’t much for giving speeches to stir up emotions before a game... Mistakes occur when your thinking is tainted by excessive emotion... Unless you’re attempting to run through a brick wall, excessive emotion is counterproductive.”



*Thank You for The Opportunity To Talk
With You This Afternoon*

*I wish you good luck and if you need to
contact me...*

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