

Communicating with players

Essentially, it is a coach's ability to communicate that determines his/her success. Having the best session content is of no use if you cannot communicate effectively with your players.

Players are human beings with various quirks and hang-ups like the rest of us and a skilled coach can see and adapt to these obstacles when he/she has learnt to communicate effectively.

The coach must understand that each player responds to information in different ways. Just because you have told a player something does not necessarily mean it has registered and they have taken it on board.

Some players need to be taken to the side and encouraged rather than be embarrassed in front of the group. Others need a stern word and a clear no-nonsense set of instructions.

You need to negotiate this array of personalities in order to communicate your points with clarity.

Simplicity

As a rule of thumb, your instructions should be simple, concise and to the point. There is nothing worse than a coach who dishes out mumbled and jumbled messages that are unclear. This only confuses players and frustrates them as they are always looking for clear direction from their coach.

The players are essentially looking to implement what the coach wants and it makes them feel good about themselves when they have successfully understood and done what the coach has requested. This builds confidence in the player and enhances their performance.

Positivity

Always convey positive messages to your players. It is of no use to the player to be constantly told what he/she is not doing well as this will damage confidence and will not make them a better player.

Any mistakes that need to be addressed should be dealt with constructively and with a simple explanation as to why you wish the player to change what he/she is doing. Tell them why it is the wrong decision/position/pass etc..

Always adopt a positive approach to coaching and games as the coach is the flagship of the team and it is to them that the players look to for confidence and inspiration.

This is important to remember as, no matter how down or defeatist you may be feeling, it is imperative that this is not conveyed to the players in any way as this will only knock their confidence.

Interaction with the team

Be open with your team. Encourage any questions that the players may have. The more open and positive and knowledgeable you show yourself to be, the more respect and confidence the players will have in you.

If your beliefs and methods are sound then there should be no fear in being open with your players when it comes to sticking to and defending your way of play. Although being open is a positive trait, do not let the players start to dictate as they can soon step above their station and become misguided and negative in their assumptions.

If you feel that your interaction is drifting too far down the players' side then use your discernment and step in to retain order and bring the discussion back under your control and influence. You are the boss and the players need to respect this.

Summary

As coach you will have to learn how to effectively communicate with your players on an individual and a team basis. The art of getting to know your players and knowing how best they respond to instruction is key in your overall success as coach. Following the hints given here you can build a confident and open demeanour that all players will respect and respond to.