

## Motivating players

The idea behind motivating your players is to find ways to eliminate any blocks they might have in performing to the best of their ability.

Ideally all your players should be fully motivated in every game they play, but this is not always the case. It is the coach's job to find ways to free the players' minds and unlock any negative, restricting beliefs that may be affecting their motivation and performance.

Typical things to look for in your players that may be effecting their motivation and performance:

1. Anxiety
2. Low confidence
3. Shyness
4. Fear
5. Being over-hyped
6. Aggressiveness

All of these blocks can seriously affect a player's performance. It is the coach's job to find ways to neutralise these fears and establish a more positive frame of mind.

Essentially, a lack in confidence can underlie all of these blocks and therefore it is imperative that the coach projects a confident and strong, yet caring, image on a consistent basis.

If the coach feels a player may be having problems off the pitch then a discrete conversation with the player's friends/parents/teammates can be an effective way of establishing what is wrong before approaching the player.

Make sure this is done in a caring and casual way as the player will feel extremely uneasy if he thinks that you are snooping behind his back.

A caring and discrete chat in private with a player like this will make a dramatic effect on his/her confidence and will hopefully motivate the player to perform as he/she knows that they are important enough to be talked to in such a manner.

All of these negative blocks can creep into your players for a variety of reasons.

Below are 3 circumstances that can cause different motivational problems to arise and ways to deal with them.

### **When on a losing streak**

A negative run of results will inevitably affect your players' confidence, so it is essential that you remain calm and focused. In essence, whatever state of mind you wish your players to adopt you must present yourself.

It is no good getting upset and angry with the players as this will only heap more pressure on them. Mistakes creep into players' games when they are fearful and unsure of their ability, which is what can happen when on a losing streak.

It is important to show support and belief in your players and assure them, with confidence, that if they keep doing what they are good at then results will change and improve.

You can even go through the team individually and tell them what they are good at and what you expect from them on a match day. This simplifies things for players and gets them focused on what they are good at and stops any negative thoughts creeping in.

### **When on a winning streak**

When faced with a winning streak there are different things to look out for. Complacency may creep into some players' games - this is something you can look out for in training and match days.

It is important that as soon as you see this sort of attitude creeping in, you stamp it out by giving the players a good jolt or talking to. This will get your players concentrating again as they will realise that you are not getting carried away but are firmly focusing on the job in hand.

Other players may become jaded and tired due to the pressures of flying high and the expectancy to win. If performing poorly, these players can be rested as this will give them time out to regain their motivation and develop a stronger will to get back into the team and keep their slot.

### **When placed mid-table with nothing to play for**

This is a difficult position to be in as a coach as the players have nothing to play for and there is a decreased level of motivation throughout. The team will often find it hard-going against the more motivated teams below them and risk losing these games because of this.

A good idea as coach is to motivate the players by looking to next season and trying out new ideas to get the players thinking. They should realise that they have to perform in order to be in your plans for next season. You can try players out in different positions or implement new systems of play or even bring in a new player to keep everyone on their toes.

Always get across to the players that pride in their own performance is important and that keeping their own personal standards high is an attribute that is respected by yourself, as coach, and also by their fellow team mates.

The idea of being respected for their efforts is a massive motivational tool as this is essentially what all players look to achieve. They all wish for their performances to be recognized and respected. Use this!!

### **Summary**

An overall summary of a coach's motivational skills can be assessed by being calm and supportive in all situations. Pre-match team talks should be conducted simply, concisely and with a supportive attitude by always stating your belief in the players' ability. Football is a team game and, as head of this team, the coach needs to be part of the group, albeit in an authoritative way.

It is the coach's place to be strong, supportive, confident and caring on a consistent basis always knowing when to give players a jolt and when to give a supportive word. By being in control and in charge of your group, whilst remaining part of the group, you can produce players that will run through proverbial brick walls for you and this is every coach's dream.