



T.E.A.M. COACHING

What you can deliver

Being a coach goes beyond a win-loss ratio. A good coach works with athletes on their competency, character, civility, citizenship, and understanding of chemical health issues, all of which helps students be good athletes and leaders. One way a coach can do this effectively, is to add the T.E.A.M. Coaching philosophy to their playbook.

T.E.A.M. Coaching: Teach – Enforce – Advocate - Model

Teach. If we really want our athletes to adopt winning practices, we have to teach those practices explicitly. This is particularly important in the 'softer' skill areas of competitive character, self-direction, teamwork, and leadership. In many cases, our athletes only have a vague idea of what we really mean by those concepts. A simple approach is to pick a winning practice to emphasize at the beginning of practice (for example, 'we need more spark at practice.'). Define its importance. Tell a personal story about it. Make it clear you expect the team to embrace it and practice it.

Come back around to that theme at the end of practice. You can also use teachable moments. Teachable moments are opportunities for coaches and other adults to use everyday situations and current events to teach adolescents positive messages about alcohol use or nonuse. The following are examples of teachable moments:

- 1) Discussing how to celebrate victories without the use of alcohol.
- 2) Reinforcing the positive choices student-athletes make by not going to the parties where alcohol is present.
- 3) Reviewing the negative impact breaking of team rules has on the entire team. Addressing some of the real consequences of substance use and also some of the reasons people choose to use.

Sixty one-minute messages are much more effective than one, sixty minute lecture!

Enforce. We can enforce our teaching by assigning responsibilities and holding our athletes accountable. For example, assign the captains specific leadership practices to be completed on a daily basis. Give the entire team specific behaviors to work on in the areas of character, competence, and teamwork. Then hold them accountable for delivering.

Advocate. We can further reinforce our teaching by advocating for those behaviors we want to see.

- Take the time to recognize and reward your athletes for demonstrating winning practices.
- Point out positive behaviors by opponents or by athletes on television. This kind of positive reinforcement will encourage your athletes to keep at the front of their minds:
 - character
 - self-direction
 - teamwork
 - leadership

This is especially effective for athletes who are important to the team but not seeing much playing time.



- **Model.** When it comes to things like character, competence, teamwork, and leadership, what we do is often more important than what we say. We have to model the very values and behaviors we expect our athletes to deliver. When we don't, we send mixed signals to our athletes - signals which cause them to hesitate before stepping up. When we do model the things we want to see, we give our athletes the assurance they need to step up and deliver.

Consistency

Broken down to its elements, **T.E.A.M.** Coaching is nothing earth-shattering. We all teach, enforce, advocate, and model various skills and behaviors for our athletes. The problem for most of us is that we do not always do these things consistently and with a clear purpose in mind. The real value of T.E.A.M. Coaching is in the focused consistency it brings to our coaching. When we operate with the T.E.A.M. model in mind, we are more likely to:

- teach the right thing
- at the right time
- in the right way.
- Become more self-aware
- more consistently enforce
- Better advocate
- Better model the behaviors we want to see in our athletes.
- catch ourselves before we send contradictory messages to our athletes by teaching one thing and enforcing, advocating, or modeling another.

We cannot teach one thing and enforce, advocate, or model something contradictory. This kind of inconsistent or even contradictory teaching confuses our athletes and dilutes team trust.

T.E.A.M. Coaching is just one method that, when applied consistently, can be an extremely useful approach to help coaches be more efficient and effective in the limited time available with the athletes.