

GSM International Coaching Education Articles for Developing Your Players

Realize That Effective Feedback is the Results to Developing Your Players

The familiar coaching adage is true, and it's what you do speaks so loudly that no one can hear what you're saying was particularly important to remember when dealing with your players. Players benefit most from coaches whose actions reflect both their implied and stated values.

The coaches' ability to observe, analyze and communicate are three of coaches most valuable assets. A word of caution, however, is that the beneficial effects of verbal instruction decrease in direct proportion to the amount given. Remember: Keep it short and straightforward. Take time to videotape yourself coaching, not only at practice but also in games. Observe yourself as others see you. Frequently there is a significant difference between how coaches think they are talking, acting and communicating and what athletes perceive.

Practical Suggestions for Coaches:

1. **Give specific, performance-contingent feedback** to athletes rather than general comments lacking performance-related information.
2. **Be liberal with praise.** Most athletes prefer coaches who shout praise and whisper criticism rather than vice versa.
3. **Tell your players what improvements need to be made**, why and most importantly, how to make those corrections successfully and consistently.
4. **Observe and provide meaningful feedback** to every player at least once each training session and game.
5. **Combine verbal praise with consistent non-verbal forms of encouragement** (i.e. a pat on the back, smile, a high five, etc.).
6. **Maintain your credibility as a coach** by being accurate and sincere in your feedback and praise. Ignoring errors, giving excessive praise for mediocre performance or excessive praise for performance on simple tasks conveys to the athlete that either you don't know what you're talking about or else you have very low expectations of them as performers.
7. **Correct performance errors in non-threatening and non-punitive ways.** Finding problems is the role of a critic not a competent soccer coach. Good coaching requires the ability to not only recognize problems but also to solve them through effective, practical and successful solutions.
8. **Reward effort as much as outcome.** Repeated effort, especially in the face of failure and adversity, is one of the most important ingredients for future success.
9. **Find something the player did well and praise it.** Next tell the athlete what they did incorrectly, what they need to do to improve and why. Finish with a positive, encouraging or motivational statement.
10. **Foster an environment that allows for trying new skills**, approaches, and strategies without the fear of reprimand and punishment.