

# Effect of Coaching Behavior in Sports

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**Abstract:** Players who perceived their coaches as being more compatible, evaluated the coaches' communication ability and player-support levels more favorably. Conversely, if athletes disagreed with the coaches' goals, personality, and/or beliefs, some of the psychological needs of the players were not met. That failure often resulted in frustration and a loss of self-concept by the player. Athletes' perception of coach behavior was the foundation of their evaluation of their athletic environment. The more positive the athletes perceived their coaches' behaviors, the more positive was their athletic experience.

**Keywords:** Coaching behavior, Performance, Satisfaction, Coach, Athlete.

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## Introduction

Athletes perceive and interpret their athletic experience based on the leadership they receive, as well as their ability to perform well. Coaches such as former UCLA Bruins coach John Wooden, inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame as a coach and a player, demonstrated how coaches can influence athletes toward greatness. In order to better understand the coach-athlete relationship, studies have been conducted and efforts have been made to develop the most reliable frameworks to measure the effects of coaching behaviors and leadership styles on athletes' outcomes. Having considered the association between coaches' and players' behaviors one may consider that some players' unwanted or negative actions may also be related to coaches' behaviors. Coaches help people perform tasks. Coaching is pervasive throughout the life course, from childhood (e.g., a parent helping a child learn to ride a tricycle), through schooling (e.g., a teacher coaching a student in the proper conduct of a chemistry experiment), and into adulthood (e.g., a fitness coach helping with an exercise regime or a supervisor coaching an employee in improving his or her job performance).

Here we propose a theory of team coaching that is amenable to empirical testing and correction. The theory has three distinguishing features. One, it focuses on the functions that coaching serves for a team, rather than on either specific leader behaviors or leadership styles. Two, it explicitly addresses the specific times in the task performance process when coaching interventions are most likely to take and have their intended effects. Three, it explicitly identifies the conditions under which team-focused coaching is most likely to facilitate performance. Overall, we show that the impact of team coaching whether provided by a formal team leader or by fellow group members depends directly and substantially on the degree to which the proper coaching functions are fulfilled competently at appropriate times and in appropriate circumstances.

## Impact of the Coach

Research has indicated that players retain information based on following methods:

**5% of what they HEAR**

**25% of what they SEE**

**75% of what they DO**

**90% of what they TEACH**

The most effective coaches spend a minimal time talking, allowing their players to learn and develop by doing. Obviously, we will spend time teaching fundamental skill techniques such as skating, puck handling, passing and shooting. Without a proper foundation, the players' development will be limited. Allow the players to practice proper techniques at a slow comfortable speed to insure correctness before you ratchet up the speed. Practicing poor technique fast only insures that

the player will become bad quickly. Research has shown that those players that learned and developed by doing and experimenting have had far more success. Players that do not fear making mistakes during their development have stretched their skill level outside their comfort zone. Too often, the habits that players develop in becoming good enough (comfortable) are the same conservative habits that keep them from becoming great (paraphrased from Tiger Woods). Practicing with a purpose should be paramount in developing your practice plans. I cannot emphasize enough the use of competitive drill situations that cause players to think and make decisions. Drills should be competitive, have outcomes and consequences. Too many practices are strictly physical; the players follow strict drill patterns as mapped out by the coach. The drills have no options and the players just follow the specific drill pattern as designed by the coach. The game is arguably 85% mental and only 15% physical, yet many of our practices are just the reverse.

### **Small Games with a Purpose**

Effective coaches have developed a philosophy and established objectives. These may be modified or even changed as the season progresses. It is important that your players and when appropriate the parents know your philosophy and objectives. I believe the coach does not have to be liked by his/her players. The coach is an authority figure and often must be firm and exercise that authority. However, effective coaches have their players' respect and trust. The most effective coaches are consistent and treat all their players fairly. Treat all your players, as you would want a coach to treat your own children. At the youth levels, you should hold a pre-season, mid-season, and an end-season parent meeting. Be transparent in your expectations, philosophy, and objectives. I have often used this phrase when talking to parents – "You love them and I will coach them".

Have fun enjoy your season – What you see is what you coached.

### **How Do I Know if My Coach Is a Bully?**

To determine if a coach is a bully, you must first know what bullying behavior looks and feels like.

Bullying is aggressive behavior that occurs repeatedly over time in a relationship where there is an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take many forms, including physical violence, verbal abuse, social manipulation and attacks on property. Physical violence is not usually a component of a coaching relationship. If your coach is physically violent with an athlete, call the authorities.

Verbal and emotional abuse is much more common in athletics. It can lead to severe and long-lasting effects on the athlete's social and emotional development. In a world where "more is better" in terms of training and "no pain means no gain," there is a great deal of machismo in coaches. Most coaches coach the same way that they were coached while playing the sport growing up. This means that many coaches are still operating as if the training methods used in the Soviet Union in the 1970s are state of the art. "We will deprive you of food until you win gold medal." Central to this old school mindset is the idea that threat, intimidation, fear, guilt, shame, and name-calling are all viable ways to push athletes to excel.

News flash: None of these is a worthwhile motivator for anyone. These are the bricks which line the road paved to burnout, rebellion and hatred of a once-loved sport.

### **What Does Verbal and Emotional Abuse Look Like in Athletics?**

Usually, this involves a coach telling an athlete or making him or her feel that he or she is worthless, despised, inadequate, or valued only as a result of his or her athletic performance. Such messages are not conveyed merely with the spoken word. They are conveyed by tone of voice, body language, facial expression and withdrawal of physical or emotional support.

This is a large part of why bullying in athletics is so hard to quantify: A clear definition of bullying is somewhat elusive. Even if we can define it, as above, it's highly difficult to measure.

Bullying is partly defined by the athlete's subjective experience. In other words, if the athlete feels shamed, frightened, or anxious around the coach due to his or her constant shouting, name-calling or threatening, then the label "emotional abuse" is warranted.

### **How Widespread Is Bullying by Athletic Coaches?**

There are no hard and fast figures on coaches who bully. In school, we know that 90 percent of 4th through 8th graders report being victims of some form of bullying at some point in their past. In a 2005 UCLA study, Jaana Juvonen found that nearly 50 percent of 6th graders reported being the victim of bullying in the preceding five-day period.

In general, boys are more physically aggressive (physical bullying), whereas girls rely more on social exclusion, teasing, and cliques (verbal or emotional bullying).

Psychological research has debunked several myths associated with bullying, including one that states bullies usually are the most unpopular students in school. A 2000 study by psychologist Philip Rodkin, Ph.D and colleagues involving fourth-through sixth-grade boys found that highly aggressive boys may be among the most popular and socially connected children in elementary classrooms, as seen by their peers and teachers.

Another myth is that bullies are anxious and self-doubting individuals who bully to compensate for their low self-esteem. However, there is no support for such a view. Most bullies have average or better than average self-esteem. Many bullies are relatively popular and have “henchmen” who help with their bullying behaviors.

According to the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, there are approximately 2.5 million adults in the United States each year who volunteer their time to coach. Using our tentative number of 50 percent would mean that there are roughly 1.25 million adult coaches who have bullied a child athlete in the past. And this number does not even take into account coaches who are paid for their services and who may be more likely to bully due to the pressures and expectations placed upon them.

### **Factors Affecting Coaching Behavior**

Coach's personal characteristics Here we have to consider any of the coach's personal characteristics that could have a positive or negative influence on the coaching process. These could include the coach's philosophy, style, beliefs, perceptions and even personal life. Each of these can impact on the coaching process and therefore directly affect the attainment of the goal. Athlete's personal characteristics and level of development The athlete's character and level of development can have a direct effect on the attainment of the goal; indeed the nature of the athlete will have a direct bearing on the coaching process adopted by the coach. Within this component, we need to consider such issues as the athlete's learning style, stage of learning, motivation, personal abilities, identity and acquisition of skills. Contextual factors A saying often applied to sport is ‘\_control the controllable’. Many aspects of the coaching process may be controlled. Some, such as illness and environmental conditions, may not be fully controllable but can still be addressed by both the coach and the athlete. Those factors that neither the coach nor athlete can control are termed contextual factors. An example of a contextual factor would be losing a competition as a result of a poor ruling from an official or referee. The athletic component may have been controlled, but the decision of the official is not controllable, and may be something that has to be accepted without necessarily agreeing with it. Contextual factors can have a profound positive or negative effect on the coaching process and the attainment of the goal.

### **Team coaching**

Team coaching is an act of leadership, but it is not the only one or necessarily the most consequential one. Team leaders engage in many different kinds of behaviors intended to foster team effectiveness, including structuring the team and establishing its purposes, arranging for the resources a team needs for its work and removing organizational roadblocks that impede the work, helping individual members strengthen their personal contributions to the team, and working with the team as a whole to help members use their collective resources well in pursuing team purposes. Leaders vary in how they allocate their time and attention across these activities, depending on their own preferences; what they believe the team most needs; and the team's own level of authority, initiative, and maturity. Only the last two sets of activities (helping individual members strengthen personal contributions and working with the team to help use resources well) are coaching behaviors, however, focusing respectively on individual team members and on the team as a whole.

In this paper we deal exclusively with the fourth—team coaching—which we define as direct interaction with a team intended to help members make coordinated and task-appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's work. Although team coaching is a distinct and often consequential aspect of team leadership, recent evidence suggests that leaders focus their behavior less on team coaching than on other aspects of the team leadership portfolio.



### **Leadership behaviour model**

The leadership behaviour model (LBM) (Smoll and Smith, 1989) is the closest example that fits with the coaching process model proposed by Côté et al (1995). The LBM attempts to knit together the coach's behaviour to the athlete's perception of the coach's behaviour, resulting in the athlete's responses to these perceptions. This approach is very similar to that proposed in the multidimensional model of leadership. There are, however, some striking differences. The LBM suggests ways in which the 'central process' can be affected by various factors, all playing a role in the coach/ athlete relationship and thereby athlete performance. The contributing factors include: coach and athlete individual differences; the coach's perception of the athlete's ability; and specific situational factors. Having viewed a number of models of leadership and coaching behavior, we have identified several key principles, the most fundamental of which is the importance of the coach/athlete relationship.

### **The coach/athlete relationship**

A strong coach/athlete relationship is associated with high levels of athlete performance and satisfaction. If we look at a poor relationship or incompatibility between the coach and athlete, we will begin to appreciate the characteristics associated with strong relationships. The two primary variables associated with poor relationships are lack of communication and lack of rewarding behaviour from the coach. Poor coach/athlete relationships are associated with lack of mutual respect, no real appreciation for either person's role and perhaps the most serious of all, lack of honesty between both parties when communication does occur. Given that it is clear what makes a poor relationship, it should be clear what makes a strong relationship: good communication, mutual respect, rewarding behaviour from the coach and a strong appreciation for each other's role. This is easier said than done, but they are fundamental to the coach/athlete relationship.

### **Communication – the key to success**

Open dialogue between the coach and athlete is associated with greater degrees of athlete satisfaction and better performances. Good performances should be praised, with the coach providing insightful information on that performance. A poor performance should not be openly criticized; instead, the coach should highlight any good aspect of the performance, no matter how minor and praise that. They should then use communication skills to apply constructive criticism to the performance, allowing the athlete to learn and theoretically correct mistakes that were made. This praise and criticism approach to coaching can only come about through a solid coach/athlete relationship built on mutual respect.

### **Simple Ways to Make a Positive Impact on Players' Lives**

Coaching is more than X's and O's. It is more than winning and losing and getting into the newspaper. If you are a coach, in a youth or school situation, you are responsible for young people's lives. Charles Barkley once said "I am not a role model." Well, if you are a coach, like it or not, you are a role model. It is your responsibility to have a positive impact on your players' lives.

That responsibility should not be taken lightly or without thought. As a coach, you must think about the effect your actions have on your players' lives.

To make a positive impact on a player's life you have to be positive yourself. Be instructive, not destructive; build people up, don't tear them down. Remember at all times, you are a teacher. You have to be unyielding but flexible.

The second thing is to take an interest in your players as people. Your consistency of interest in the players should not be dependent on how well they are playing. Spend time with them off the court, discussing things other than basketball. Relate experience of how basketball is a vehicle to take you to places they never thought they would be. Off the court, teach them that if they can dream, they can accomplish. Relate basketball experience to life experience.

You also have to remember that they are not your kids. Do not overstep your bounds or responsibilities. In the best of cases, you might be in "loco parentis." Be careful not to intrude into family life.

Baseball great Jackie Robinson once said that the value of a man's life is measured by the effect he has on others. We all have that responsibility. Make it positive.

### **Conclusion**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate what effect has come to players due to coaching behavior of their coach, the relationship between coaches' behaviors, and levels of satisfaction experienced by soccer players in the country and to examine how coaches' behavior were related to satisfaction. The many varied managerial function of coach including, organizing, budgeting, scheduling, recruiting, public relations, leadership, etc. The behavioural process of influencing individuals and group towards set goals is the most significant because others functions are performed away from the actual coaching context. The leadership provided by the coach is mainly instrumental in enhancing the motivational state of the group and in turn the motivational state of the group is the ultimate basis of performance effectiveness. The effectiveness of the coaching behaviour is contingent on its congruence with the preferences of the members as well as the dictates of the situational characteristics.

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