

The Importance of Communication Skills for Club League Coaches

You may be a coach with a lot of ideas and dreams for your team, but do you know how to communicate properly to get the best results? There are a few circumstances which are very touchy and about which you need to be very careful.

1. When you explain how to perform a simple or complex exercise to your players.
2. When a parent asks why his or her child is not getting enough quality minutes during matches.
3. When, in your opinion, a referee makes a bad call.
4. When your "star" player shows up late and tells you that he or she is ready to play.
5. Etc.

It is important to understand that communication means not only giving messages, but also receiving them. We could say that communication is done through verbal and non-verbal messages.

Being angry, using acts of intimidation, facial expressions, are all a part of nonverbal communication and usually they make up 70% of the way we communicate. Any message that has *content* and *emotion* is a form of communication.

A large measure of being a successful coach is trying to control these two parts. Use positive emotions. Do not use negative emotions to criticize and control a player's mistakes. Use clear and short explanations. If you hurt a player's feelings, it will be hard to gain back their respect at a later date.

It is important to define the way you will communicate. Explain your point of view, accept theirs in every issue and give them an opportunity for an individual interpretation.

Players with the same problem can have different interpretations about messages that came from the coach. I recommend that you use individual conversation with players who need improvement in some area.

Never criticize your players in front of the group. You can create attitude problems that will make your job more difficult and consequently affect your team's performance. Don't only praise players when you win the game. They need your encouragement all the time.

Developing Good Communication Skills

1. Be a cooperative style coach.
2. Try to know as much about soccer, or at least be honest about the knowledge that you do have.
3. Be reliable, fair and consistent in dealing with your athletes.
4. Express warmth, friendliness, acceptance, and empathy.
5. Be dynamic and spontaneous.
6. Use the **POSITIVE APPROACH**. See below:

The positive approach emphasizes praise and rewards to strengthen desirable behaviors, whereas the negative approach uses punishment and criticism to eliminate undesirable behaviors. The positive approach increases their value as individuals, and it gives the coach more credibility. The negative approach increases fear of failure and can destroy your credibility.

Communicating with Consistency

THIS INVOLVES IMPROVING YOUR LISTENING SKILLS AS FOLLOWS:

1. Recognize the need to listen.
2. Concentrate on listening.
3. When listening, search for the meaning of the message rather than focusing on the details.