

COACH LEADERSHIP TECHNIQUES THAT CREATE
TEAM COHESION

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Abstract

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The head coach of an athletic team is the leader of that group of athletes. Each and every year the head coach will get a new group of athletes and every new group must go through a number of developmental stages. Bruce Tuckman (1965) along with Tuckman & Jensen (1977) created a stage model for group development. This stage model suggests that teams move through five stages of development (forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning). It is the coaches responsibility to move his/her team through these stages.

In order for a coach to lead a team effectively and create team cohesion, Chelladurai and Carron (1978) discuss the importance of leader behaviors in terms of five dimensions; training and instruction, democratic and autocratic behavior, positive feedback and social support. There are many techniques used by the coach to create social and task cohesion among the players. It is the coaches' duty to instruct, guide, motivate, provide corrective and positive feedback, and develop young adults into being role models in their communities. A coach needs to have a unique way of gaining trust from the athletes, which in the end will open up communication lines between the coach and players and players with players. This will create a team that is working towards the same goal or goals. A team that acts like a family and truly cares about one another will find a way to win not only on the playing field, but also in life.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The head coach of an athletic team is the leader of a group of athletes. The coach has to find his/her own coaching style that will relate well with the team because the coach has the most power over the athletes. Added to that however, the coach also has incredible influence on a student-athlete both positively and negatively. The coach must use his/her power in the proper manner to hopefully generate as many positive influences' on that player as possible. It is also his/her duty to instruct, guide, motivate, provide corrective and positive feedback, and develop young adults into being positive role models in their communities and future career settings. A coach needs to have a genuine way of gaining trust from the athletes, which in the end will open up communication lines between the coach and players and players with players. This will create a team that is working towards the same goal or goals. A team that acts like a family and truly cares about one another will find a way to win not only on the playing field, but also in life.

Traditionally teams that have team cohesion find a way to win more games. Cohesion is built through planning and structure. The coach's plan and structure must have both obtainable short term and long term goals present. If the players see that the success of the short term goals are gaining positive progress towards the long term goals then trust between the players and coach will get stronger. The players must trust the coach's decision making skills, whether his/her methods have proven to work, and trust that his/her character is strong enough to lead them to that common goal. The ultimate team cohesion is found when both the coach and the players have a strong trust bond, believe in the same goals, and work to achieve those goals together.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to be addressed stated as a question is “which coaching leadership traits are effective in creating team cohesion on athletic sport teams?”

Definition of Terms

Coaching Leadership. Coaching Leadership is defined as coaches’ behavioral processes that influence team members toward performance accomplishments (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998). Coaching Leadership is the “behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups towards set goals is interpersonal in nature, entails a high degree of direct interaction with athletes and bears directly on the motivation of the team members” (Chelladurai, 1984).

Effective. Is having the ability to communicate, motivate, create chemistry and strategize. Having these skills may allow a coach to be more successful on the field as well as off the field.

Sport Teams. In regards to this research, “sports teams are classified by their structure as interacting teams. Such groups must coordinate player efforts during goal pursuit in order to achieve success. Members are, therefore, interdependent so that during the athletic contest the action of one member may either facilitate or hinder the goal-seeking efforts of all. In team sports, such as basketball, volleyball and hockey, goal attainment is achieved through the mutually dependent role interactions of all players” (Bird, 1977 p. 218).

Team Cohesion. “Cohesion is a process that involves the propensity for a sport team to form a bond in the quest of satisfying its performance goals or its members’ affective needs (Carron, Widmeyer, and Brawley, 1985 p.3). Simply stated, “cohesion is the state or condition of joining

or working together to form a united whole, or the tendency to do this (Aghazadeh & Kyei, 2009 p. 295).

Delimitations of Research

The research will be conducted in and through the Karmann library at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville over a period of forty five (45) days. Primary searches will be conducted via Internet through EBSCO Host with ERIC, Academic Search Elite, PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO. Key search topics will include “coach leadership and team cohesion,” “coaching styles or team unity,” and “management or success.”

Method of Approach

A brief review of the history of sports psychology research on the Bruce Tuckman’s Stage Model and the Leadership Scale for Sports will be conducted. A review of literature relating to research, studies, and anecdotal evidence of coach leadership traits used on athletes to create team cohesion will be conducted. The findings will be summarized, and recommendations made.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

Bruce Tuckman's Developmental Stage Model

Every year coaches get a new group of individual athletes to work with. Some teams may be filled with highly skilled athletes, while other teams may have beginning or low-skilled athletes on the team. Either way, every team goes through a number of sequential developmental stages. This process can take a few days to a few months to get a team through all the stages. It is the coach's role to facilitate this social process and the tempo to move the team through the defined stages of group development.

Experts Sutherland and Stroot (2010) say the most cited sequential stage model of small group dynamics (Burns, 2004; Johnson, & Johnson, 2002) is the model originally proposed by Bruce Tuckman (1965). Tuckman (1965) created a staged model for group development, which proposed that groups move through four stages of development (forming, storming, norming and performing). However, after a review of the research, Tuckman and Jensen (1977) decided to add a fifth stage to the stage model for group development, which is called adjourning.

Depending on the amount of time a group has together, will dictate how fast that group will move through the stages. Tuckman's (1965) model does not delineate how much time should be spent in each phase. Groups, who are only together for a few short minutes to hours, move into the performing stage more quickly than groups who are together for longer periods of time.

Athletic teams have months to spend together, therefore, more interpersonal and complex tasks are involved (Sutherland, & Stroot, 2010), in which it may take each team greater lengths of time to move through all the stages successfully.

When a new group of people get together for the first time that team of people go through many phases. The first phase is coined the "forming" stage of group development (Tuckman,

1965). During this stage the team members have a high dependence on the coach for guidance and direction. Individual roles and responsibilities are unclear for the teammates, and the coach has to be ready to answer a lot of questions regarding the team's purpose, objectives and relationships. Students of the Tuckman Stages Fabrizio and Neill, (2005) say "participants are stimulated by getting to know each other, but they spend time observing the dynamics of the group and gaining an understanding of the expectations" p46. They also attempt to address potential problems as each member is familiarized with one another. "Conflict often occurs early between team members as they express differences in values and perspectives" (Tekleab, Quigley, & Tesluk, 2009 p171). In order to move beyond the forming stage, the coach has to direct the athlete's attention to the overall purpose of the team and away from individual goals and selfish wishes.

The next developmental stage a team passes through is called "storming" (Tuckman, 1965). During the storming stage "individual team members seek to clarify roles, gain independence from the team leader, and form coalitions" (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman, & Jensen, 1977 p423). During this storming stage it is important that the coach of the team clarifies team goals and individual roles of players on the team. However, there are still plenty of uncertainties that exist among team members. Cliques and internal conflicts form and there may be power struggles amongst the team. The coach needs to direct the focus of the team's energy on individual and team goals so that the team can avoid becoming distracted by relationships and emotional issues that could occur between teammates. Fabrizio and Neill (2005) contend that there is danger that if a group is unable to work through these issues it could have detrimental effects on the group members (Sutherland, & Stroot 2010 p171). In order to move on to the next stage, the team must overcome the conflicts that exist on the team.

As roles and personal conflicts are sorted out, the team starts to focus on the task and what needs to be done. This stage is labeled the “norming” stage of group development (Tuckman, 1965). The use of open communication between the coach and the players allows the team a chance to resolve disagreements. Once teams have successfully overcome any conflicts, trust develops between team members leading to higher levels of team cohesion and greater team effectiveness (Tekleab, et al 2009). Socially group roles are developed and are refined. The team may be more cohesive, develop a structure which now includes all team members, and exhibits increased supportiveness (Sutherland, & Stroot, 2010). The team may engage in fun and social activities outside of practice, and off the game field. The individual members of the team start to feel and act as one unified body. The team is working to establish a set of norms regarding social interactions (Fabrizio, & Neill, 2005). The team develops a clear sense of identity. There is respect for the coach and overall leadership responsibilities are shared by members of the team. “The general resistance toward the group is minimized and enhanced cooperation enables goal attainment” (Ryska, & Cooley, 1999).

Tuckman’s (1965) fourth developmental stage that a team must go through is called the “performing” stage. This stage can be “characterized by the group’s mastery of the task requirements and cohesion among group members” (Sutherland, & Stroot, 2010). During this stage, the entire team understands the ultimate goals that are being pursued, and the team knows clearly why it is doing what it is doing. Team members agree on the overall vision for the team, and the team experiences a high degree of independence. At this time, “the team is able to function as effective, problem-solving entities” (Tekleab, et al 2009 p175). A steady-state is achieved, where the team needs delegated tasks from the coach, but no longer needs instructions

to reach the optimal level of performance. This is the stage when all athletes and coaches believe in the team's cause and everyone is striving to achieve all the same goals.

The fifth and final stage that the group moves through is coined the "adjourning" stage (Tuckman, & Jensen, 1977). This stage involves completing all the tasks, and goals as a team and then the disbandment of the team. This is the end of the season, the end of the team as everyone knew it. It is a time to say goodbye. It is a time to mourn. All team members must be able to look to the future and find his/her new way in life without the family that each team member has grown to love and cherish. This may also be a time for rejoicing or relief, if the team members did not get along well, or if the season goals were not achieved. This may be a time for celebrating or for mourning depending on the level of team cohesion and the amount of success that a team may have achieved or may not have achieved. This is a time for everyone to reflect on the past season, but also a time to prepare for the future.

Leadership Scale for Sports

Team sports have provided a meaningful context for studying leadership and its effects. Within sport settings, leadership behavior has been most frequently studied in light of Chelladurai and Carron's (1978) Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML) (Shields, Gardner, 1997). To define specific components of leader behavior, Chelladurai and Carron (1978) adapted to the sport context, and elaborated leader behaviors in terms of five dimensions: training and instruction, democratic and autocratic behavior, positive feedback and social support. One of the most frequently used scales within sport psychology research is the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS; Chelladurai, & Saleh, 1980). This is the only scale that comprehensively assesses leadership behaviors in sport settings (Jowett, Chaundy, 2004). All five of the dimensions are discussed in further detail below.

Dimension 1-- Training and Instruction. “Training and Instruction reflects one of the important functions of a coach, which is to improve the performance level of the athlete. The coach trains and instructs the athletes to help them in how to acquire the necessary skills and to teach them the techniques and the tactics of the sports. During this time, the coach also coordinates the activities of the team members” (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980 p41).

Dimension 2—Democratic Behavior. “Democratic behavior reflects the extent to which the coach permits participation by the athletes in decision making. The athletes may help decide upon the overall team goals and/or ways in which these goals are to be attained” (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980 p41).

Dimension 3--Autocratic Behavior. “Autocratic behavior indicates the extent to which a coach keeps apart from the athletes and stresses his or her authority in dealing with them. With autocratic behavior, it is expected that the coach would demand strict compliance with his or her decisions” (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980 p41).

Dimension 4—Social Support. “Social support refers to the extent to which the coach is involved in satisfying the interpersonal needs of the athletes. The coach’s behavior may directly satisfy such needs or the coach may create a climate in which the members mutually satisfy their interpersonal needs” (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980 p42).

Dimension 5—Positive Feedback. “Positive feedback is important for the coach to express appreciation and to compliment the athletes for their performance and contribution. Positive feedback from the coach is crucial in maintaining the motivational level of the athletes” (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980 p43).

Throughout most of the research conducted the coaches’ training and instruction along with the athletes’ commitment to the coach related more strongly to task cohesion than any other

leadership and relationship variable. For example, Jowett and Chaundy (2004) suggested that coaches and athletes time is better spent on building task cohesion than building social cohesion. Other students of the developmental tasks say most important variable contributing to a team's level of cohesion is the leader of the team, specifically the coaches' leadership style (Aghazadeh, & Kyei, 2009).

Athlete Integration-Social Cohesion

Athletes need to feel a strong sense of belonging on a team in order to perform to the best of his/her ability. Making an athlete feel accepted and a part of the team is an important role of a coach. In order to do this, social cohesion needs to be facilitated within a team. Boone, Beitel and Kuhlman (1997) suggest that having a winning record or a successful season maintains social cohesion for the members on that team. Social cohesion is defined as the degree to which members of a team like each other (Jowett, & Chaundy, 2004). A high level of social cohesion creates a team that respects and cherishes each other and the friendships that come along with camaraderie.

Effective coaching behaviors may vary according to the demands of a particular situation, a particular team, the skill level of the player(s) and the resultant strategy (Bird, 1977). Entry level coaches tend to gear his/her coaching techniques toward creating social cohesion with the players and working on basic skill development. It is interesting in this regard that Ryska and Cooley (1999) concluded that coaches from Australia tended to focus more of their energy on creating social cohesion on their teams through athlete integration strategies. Australian coaches suggested that teams worked better when more of the coach's attention was geared toward getting to know athletes personally, eliminating internal conflicts, and helping satisfy individual

needs within the team context (Ryska, & Cooley, 1999). Each coach has his/her own unique way of gaining the trust of his/her athletes and creating a cohesive team.

During the first days a team is together a strategy that coaches use to create social team cohesion is called athlete integration which allows team members to develop a sense of belonging and a connectedness to the team as a social entity (Ryska, & Cooley, 1999). A valuable coaching technique that creates social cohesion is to get to know personal information about each and every player on the team. The coach may simply ask personal questions, or do team building activities, or may have athletes first learn about each other and then have each athlete present that information just learned about the other teammate to the team. After learning personal information about the players, the coach tends to accept individual differences among the players, which makes each individual member feel socially accepted and a part of the team. All of these interactions will help to create a bond or trust between the coach and players. The athlete believes the coach cares about him/her on a personal level, which makes the player feel that he/she belongs on the team, which then will heighten the overall social cohesion on the team.

A technique called “bragging” is used by coaches to increase team cohesion. When a coach sees an athlete modeling appropriate behavior or performing a skill correctly, the coach will praise that model athlete. This draws the other teammate’s attention to the model athlete, and the other players are not afraid to ask the model athlete how he/she performed the skill correctly. This helps the players learn from each other, which in turn makes other team members feel more connected to each other. This technique increases the self-esteem of the “model athlete”, and it also gives the other teammate an opportunity to learn correct movement patterns or attitudes from the “bragged up” athlete (Turman, 2003).

Coaches use moderate or tempered sarcasm and teasing techniques to promote cohesion. When a coach jokes around with the players on the team, it shows a not so serious side of the coach, which allows athletes to relate and laugh with the coach. This technique of teasing and joking around with student-athletes is a way that trust is formed between the coach and players. People tend to only joke around or tease those around them that they like and feel comfortable with. Therefore, it is socially generally understood from those getting teased that the person doing the teasing has respect and sincerity toward the individual getting teased. This helps to create team cohesion.

Coaches try to disband intra-team cliques to keep the team cohesion high. One way a coach may do this is by creating a senior team leadership program. A coach may assign team members to a senior “team captain”. If the teammates have a problem, first he/she is to discuss the problem with his/her group captain. This helps to open up communication lines between the players. If these teammates can not resolve the problem on their own, then they are to approach the coach together. When the coach gets involved, then the issue is addressed with the whole team. That way the problem can be discussed in an open forum and the problem can be resolved in a respectable and timely manner.

By resolving team issues in a respectable manner, a coach also uses an important technique that focuses on maintaining a peaceful team climate. Take for example the deadly disease cancer, it only takes one bad blood cell to infect the body and cause great harm to an individual or even possibly death. Cancer is often commonly used as an analogy in the sporting arena to illustrate how one individual who may have a horrible attitude can cause great harm to a team. With cancer, the bad blood cell infects other blood cells, and eventually the bad blood cells overpower the good blood cells and this causes bodily harm. The analogy relates to the

team. One bad individual will infect another player, then another, and so on until the entire team is full of bad attitudes and then the team is in serious trouble. Having players involved in the decision making process through democratic behavior allows the coach to monitor these cancerous players and resolve these issues before they get to serious. It is similar to going for routine checkups to the doctor and catching cancer early, it is easier to defeat the disease.

Role Development-Task Cohesion

Coaches have the most power over the athletes. Interactive sport teams rely on each member of the team to perform specific skills correctly in order to produce a successful team performance. On the sports field of baseball or football, a coach needs to provide specific skill instruction for each position being played in the game. Therefore, all members of the team need to be able to perform his/her skills correctly in order to produce a successful outcome to the game being played. There needs to be many skilled position players on the field at the same time to create a successful team.

Role development strategies provide each team member with goal-directed responsibilities as well as opportunities to make meaningful and unique contributions to achieving collective goals (Ryska, & Cooley, 1999). Role development creates task cohesion on a team. Task cohesion is defined as a degree to which members cooperate to achieve common performance goals (Jowett, & Chaundy, 2004). According to Ryska and Cooley, (1999) United States coaches preferred to use team drills to promote cooperation to achieve team cohesion. There are many techniques a coach may use to create task cohesion.

An interactive sports team plays many contests throughout the season. From the first day of practice to the last day of competition, the team spends an incredible amount of time together. Spending a lot of time together as a whole group, allows for the team to feel more cohesive. An

effective coaching technique is to make the teammates spend time together not only on the field, but also off the field. There are many ways a coach may have a team spend time together off the field.

A team may have to study and do homework together after practices. This allows for the coach to help the athletes with their classes and he/she may provide some helpful hints as to how to study properly, take notes correctly, or even provide relaxation techniques prior to taking an exam. This illustrates to the student-athletes that academic success is more important than athletic success. Most student-athletes do not go on to play professional sports, however with an academic degree in hand; the student-athlete will be successful in life long after his/her playing days are over in something other than sports. This is valuable time spent together for both the coach and the student-athletes to build cohesion.

Community service is a great way to spend time together as a team and to give back to the community that supports the team. The coach may organize hospital visits, where the team visits patients at the local hospital to boost the patient's moral. A community fall clean up may be arranged by the coach. At this time the team members are split up into groups and can either clean up a park, or help a community member rake leaves, or even help paint local business buildings to improve the overall look of the community. Student-athletes may also volunteer his/her time at local elementary schools reading to the elementary school children or helping in the classroom. There are many other community service events the coach may set up to help create a more unified team. All of this volunteer time helps each individual athlete learn more about themselves and to appreciate their teammates more. This is a great time for the athletes to have fun together, joke around, laugh, cry and have serious talks with one another.

Teams spend a lot of valuable time traveling to and from game events together. A bus, hotel or an eating establishment are all extra time spent together as one unified team. This is a unique opportunity for teammates to form close knit bonds and really start to get to know each other and to trust and believe in one another. Road trips are essential team bonding times, which allow for personal characters to come out and true leaders to emerge from the group. These are the precious moments that create memories that will last a life time for each team member.

Another effective and creative way to spend more time together is through the use of adventure based activities, such as low and high ropes courses, trust building games, team challenges and other experimental based activities. All of these activities develop cohesion, communication skills, trust, leadership, goal setting, problem solving skills and the ability for a team to work efficiently with one another (Aghazadeh, & Kyei, 2009). With all of these elements done early in a teams existence, the team will be able to work on task cohesion during practices.

The coaches' attitude or outlook on the team is a technique used to create cohesion. The coach makes every person who is a part of the program know that his/her job is crucial to the success of the team. For example, the coach discusses that the laundry person's job or the videographer's job is just as important to the success of the team as is the star athlete's role. For without one person doing his/her job, the team would not be successful. Once every person understands and accepts his/her role on the team, team unity is increased.

Developing and agreeing upon goals together as a team is critical in building team cohesion. This technique allows for the athletes to create individual goals for each game and for the entire season. The team also helps to decide upon obtainable team goals for each individual game as well as team goals for the entire season. Players and coaches will also develop a list or

method of consequences if goals and behavior expectations are not met. This makes role adjustments and disciplinary actions easier for the athletes to accept because they are in agreement with the coach on the steps that need to be taken. When players have a voice in the decision making process, evidence suggests that they are more willing to accept group decisions (Tekleab, et al 2009). The entire team will take a personal interest in seeing that their agreed upon goals are achieved together.

To make these team goals achievable, the coach will make these goals visible. This is a technique that helps make the athletes accountable. A banner or poster will be made and hung up in the locker room with the team goals stated. The team goals may be discussed prior to every practice or every game to remind the athletes of their desires. The coach may write up the team goals and team consequences, and have each team member sign a contract saying that he/she agrees to these team goals and consequences, and that he/she will do his/her part to help the team achieve success. In making all of these team goals visible; it helps to make the team goals achievable.

After team goals are discussed and finalized, a plan for holding the athletes accountable for their performance and actions must be put into place. One technique that a coach will use is to make the team accountable as a whole unit, and not as an individual player. For example, if a player is late to practice, the coach will have the entire team run together to serve as the disciplinary action for that one individual player being late. This creates team unity because it makes everyone accountable for his/her own actions. During these times of punishment, the team leaders tend to emerge from the team. Team cohesion is intensified during these hard times because everyone on the team is pulling together, encouraging each other and fighting for each other to do his/her personal best.

The topic of motivation must be discussed, and the next sections will discuss these strategies. Motivating an individual in a team environment is an extremely difficult task. When you are dealing with several athletes who all have different family lives, different personalities, different religious affiliations, and different energy levels, there is no one secret tactic. A great speech might excite some and might bore others. Motivating by actions and not words might allow some to follow and others to get distracted. However, a combination of several strategies should be employed in small amounts to cover the interests of a majority of the team.

Motivating through high energy and enthusiasm is a great way to get others excited to perform well. It is human nature to want positive feedback and reactions from those you love and respect. For example, if a baby sees its parents laugh every time it sticks out its tongue, the baby is going to continue to stick out its tongue. Everyone wants attention to some degree and to make others happy. This happens when you have a respected, enthusiastic coach. The players want to continue to perform skills correctly on the field, not only for the coach, but also for his/her teammates. When the players see the coach jumping around in excitement because of something they did well, the athletes want to continue to perform in the same manner because they made the coach happy, which in turns makes everyone excited and motivated to continue to strive for success.

Motivational speech is a technique of a coach used to send out a serious message to the team and also to help bring a team together. A speech can help a team focus on one common goal right before a practice, before entering battle with another opponent and after the completion of a competition. Before a practice, the coach can remind each player of the skills that are necessary to work on in order to allow the overall team success in a time of competition. A motivational speech before a game helps set the stage for a unified front amongst the players

and reminds those players that everyone is striving for one goal, and the importance of working together to be successful team. It is also a time to remind the team that no individual on the team can win the game alone, and that it is important to play together as a unified team. After the competition, the motivational speech may be a congratulatory speech on a job well-done or to praise the team cooperation despite the defeat.

Along the lines of motivational speeches, coaches approach tough opponents by giving speeches that talk about the rivalry between the two teams. This is clearly a technique used to create team cohesion among the team. It creates an atmosphere of “we” verse “them”. The coach does not put down the opponent, but lets the players know that anyone can win the contest. The main focus of the coach is to create a clear vision for the team that whoever works harder and puts in the time to master the skills of the game, and the strategies of the game, will most likely be successful (Turman, 2003). This focus helps to build social cohesion among the team because the teammates want to put in the time to be the best not only for themselves, but also for his/her teammates.

Another form of motivation is through prayer or meditation. Some athletes like to meditate before he/she takes the field, court or arena. These athletes like to be completely relaxed and feel at peace with them selves. They need to feel comfortable and in control of their mind and bodies. Along the lines of meditation, team prayer is another calming and focusing technique a coach or player may use before competition. Team prayer does not need to be related to any specific religious affiliation. It is a chance for the coach to focus attention on both teams staying healthy throughout the contest, and praying that each and every team member performs to the best of his/her ability. During the prayer, the coach can remind the players that it is time to put all their individual differences aside, and to come together as one team achieving

one common goal. Team prayer unites the team together by reminding the athletes that no one player alone will win the game, but with a unified front the whole team can win the game (Turman, 2003).

Chapter Three: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

In summary, this paper is a reflection on stages of team cohesion, the leaderships strategies used by coaches, social and task cohesion. The five stages of group dynamics are forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman, & Jensen, 1977). Every new group of people must go through the phases, however, getting to the performing stage depends how much time a group has together. Athletic teams have a couple of months to get through all of the stages, therefore, they experience more interpersonal issues and complex task together, which takes them longer to get to the performing stage.

When it comes to leadership skills, coaches can choose one or as many of the five coaching behaviors as listed in the seminar paper; training and instruction, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support and positive feedback (Chelladurai, & Saleh, 1980). Studies have shown that most successful coaches in all different fields of competition, uses all five of these techniques to increase the cohesion on the team. However, it is found that autocratic style of coaching should be used the least.

Ongoing challenges for the coach and the team boils down to cohesion, both social and task. Social cohesion is defined as the degree to which members of a team like each other (Jowett, & Chaundy, 2004). Task cohesion is defined as a degree to which members cooperate to achieve common performance goals (Jowett, & Chaundy, 2004). Every year there are new players with new individual goals and personalities, that is why two teams coached by the same coaching staff, in back to back years, could have two very different levels of team cohesion and two different season ending outcomes.

Recommendations

In dealing with all aspects of leadership; coaches, managers, even presidents of companies, it is my finding that understanding people, understanding yourself as the leader, and trying to find a way to coheres everyone into believing in one goal can be done multiple ways. Throughout the research I found showed that autocratic styles of leadership are the least successful. In order to have a successful team, every member of that team must know and feel important about his/her role to the team.

Being an autocratic leader does not mean automatic failure. A coach must coach to fit his/her personality. If a coach is an authoritative person, that coach may have to make autocratic behavior style work for him or her, by understanding its strengths and its weaknesses, and then turning the weaknesses into strengths.

If a coach has the ability to be multiple in the approach, that coach can use several tactics in a positive way and avoid using methods that have been proven least successful, for example, autocratic. Just imagine being involved in a business where the leader always told the subordinates what to do, how to feel, what to think, and how to react. It would not take long for the subordinates to resent the leader. On the flip side, imagine a supervisor that shows compassion, allows decisions to be made as a group, listens to input, but makes the tough decisions when needed, that makes the followers feel important. Even if that one decision may not benefit each individual, it was made for the benefit of the whole group. And most of the time, each individual can tolerate that decisions made because the next decision made may just benefit that individual personally.

The bigger the group, the harder it is to accomplish whole group decisions, and that is when the autocratic approach is relied upon because there are too many individual demands. Take for example; the President of the United States of America, that person wants what is best for all. The President understands that every decision is going to have a positive and a negative impact on someone. So the President has to make a hard decision based on the facts and live with each and every decision.

Small groups, such as athletic teams, tend to stay away from the autocratic style because there are fewer individuals to please. For example, take a softball team with only 20 individual team members with most of the same interests such as want to be successful, competitive, athletic, and an individual drive to be a part of the group. When dealing with a group of specialized people, it is easier to ask opinions, allow for group discusses, and to come to an agreed upon decision. All members of the team will feel more socially accepted, which in the end will allow for a team working toward one unified goal.

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