

DISCOVERING WINNERS

Throughout my 48 year coaching career, I have been extremely fortunate in having had the opportunity to work with some of the greatest young people on earth. They have demonstrated a willingness to submit themselves to my suggested methods of achieving success. You've got to love them!

I realized very early the awesome responsibility entrusted to us as we influence, and help mold the lives of these great youngsters. It became even more evident in my own personal life as my children matured into adulthood and I observed the influence their coaches had upon their lives.

My coaching philosophy is not necessarily "right"----It is just my opinion taken from my coaching experiences. Below are elements I feel are necessary for being a successful coach.

Love

Every athlete we coach is someone's son or daughter. It is a personal relationship...They won't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Love talked about is easily rejected, but love demonstrated is irresistible. (Being there when needed: physical contact, eye contact, verbal encouragement. Discipline is also a form of love in action. It should be Desired/Required/Admired).

Character

If character is to be learned, it must first be observed in those of us who have authority. How well do we as Coaches, handle disappointment/success? Being a special person, student and athlete is a constant process, not hit and miss. In my opinion courage and humility are the two most important character traits developed in sports. Farther, higher, faster have very little long range significance, but relationships and values may last a life time.

Commitment

Commitment to solid principles (integrity). People generally want to be right and do well, and are willing to go to great levels of discomfort and inconvenience to achieve success. You must be committed to a strong work ethic. It is not an easy process, and there are no free lunches. Athletes must be committed to working hard even though it will get harder, not easier. Athletes must realize that they never arrive, but the trip is worth it. Their rewards are greater but their commitment must remain excessive.

22' leads to 23'

6'8" leads to 7'

44' leads to 46'

State Champ

Attitude

Coaches should maintain enthusiasm towards their commitments. As coaches we can't be down. We are the spark. Total enthusiastic commitment to right goals will overcome incorrect or imperfect procedures. Coaches should be optimistic – Talk about the possibilities – How far can they go. How much fun are you having? How much fun are the athletes having?

Preparation-Mental/Physical

Preparation is progressive, not instant. Attitude, Focus, Effort – These are instant, but you still need preparation. We must give them a chance to realize their potential both as a person and as an athlete. Then help them reach it. As coaches we must expose our athletes to the opportunity to become their very best; challenge them sufficiently and consistently and they will respond.

- Discuss requirements of workout and let them know what you expect from them as athletes; check their reactions. Hopefully they will be enthusiastic.
- Give athletes an opportunity to show initiative and take credit for their efforts. Do they request the toughest activity or an easier activity? Suggest and encourage.
- At practice, press them until their results are diminishing from their best performance, i.e. run hills until running too slow, hopping through sand until hopping fails to be productive.

- Man's greatest moment of happiness is to be pushed beyond what is thought to be his breaking point and not failing, Watch a great jumper and then video your athletes and let them compare.
- Create an atmosphere where our athletes can develop confidence (self-esteem) – a feeling of being a winner.
- Create a collective conscience as a team – have each other's back = family.
- Offer unique challenges sufficiently difficult to allow athletes to discover themselves. They will even surprise themselves by their performances.

Practice

Perfect practice makes perfect. Don't expect perfect execution, but insist upon perfect effort. Are you working harder and smarter than your opponents? If not, they are gaining on you. I don't think there is a magic workout routine, but there is magic in the way the workout is executed.

- Let practice be competitive
 1. Move your shoe
 2. Don't miss a bar
- Do a total workout: athletes do the things they like and they like the things they do well. Work on weak links.
- Let some tension build during practice sessions, (just like a meet).
- Be confrontational – just like a meet. How do you deal with competition pressures without experiencing those feelings in practice?
- Do unique things – original or not. This makes your athlete feel special that they are doing things that no one else is doing. (I.E. – 70 yard sand pit hop on 1 leg, with weight vest, pulling sled, with weight vest and sled, corner stairs for record)

Don't do your best...Do what's NECESSARY!!!

Motivational Aids

Look for motivational aids and ways to promote your program. Ideas that may help are:

- Eligibility Cards weekly.
- Bulletin Boards – thought for the day, newspaper clippings, meet and practice results.
- Articles in school and local papers.
- TV and radio coverage.
- Trophy and medal displays.
- Record board in prominent place (gym).
- Former athletes share urgency of moment.
- Squad meetings to recognize effort and review direction.

Organizational Opportunities

Coaching staff should be dedicated, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Your attitude will greatly influence your assistants.

- Budget management and supplementation – (I.E. Bank buys pit and stencil name on side).
- Summer track program and clinics for youngsters.
- Recruiting from P.E. classes, other sports, lunchroom and halls.
- Clinics – go as much as possible, be receptive.
- Subscribe to Track & Field publications.
- Upgrade equipment and weight room.
- Video as much as possible. Meets & practices.
- Have a workout diary for future reference.

Coaches have a high level of expectation, mediocrity is unacceptable. We must be able to communicate to our athletes that GOALS are not accomplished by accident. Improvement is the biggest turn on.

Through mutual effort (coach/athlete) progress is achieved.

We must ask our athletes:

- Who are you really? Define yourself...others will define you by your performance.
- What is good enough for you?
- What are you willing to do to achieve goals?

You will only achieve what you insist on, not what you want.

A good coach (knowledgeable, enthusiastic, positive, and persuasive) with an average plan will beat a poor coach with a good plan.

My wish for you is that your career may be as challenging, meaningful and rewarding as mine has been to me. Coaching is not a job---it's a calling.

MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET \$\$\$\$\$



MAKE A LIFE BY WHAT WE GIVE