



RUNNERS' MOTIVATION AND MENTAL PREPARATION

Presented by Don Berger
North Salem High School



Don Berger Resume

40 Years of Coaching Track

9 Team State Championships

21 Team District Championships

60 Individual/Relay State Championships

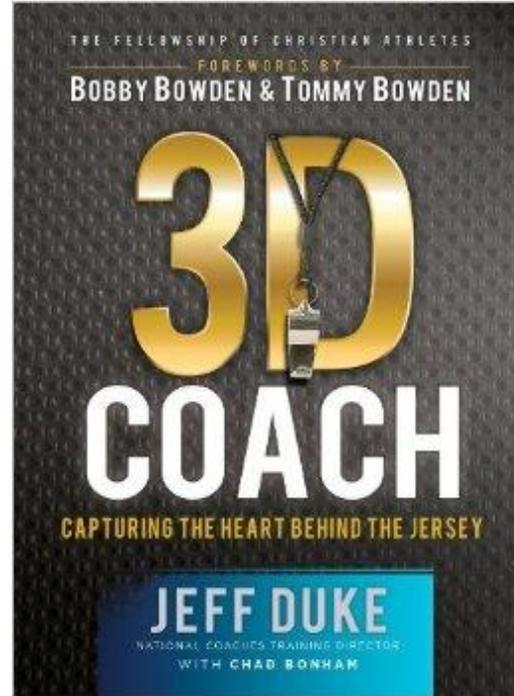
Coached best 2A teams (B & G) in Oregon history

Coached best XC team in school history

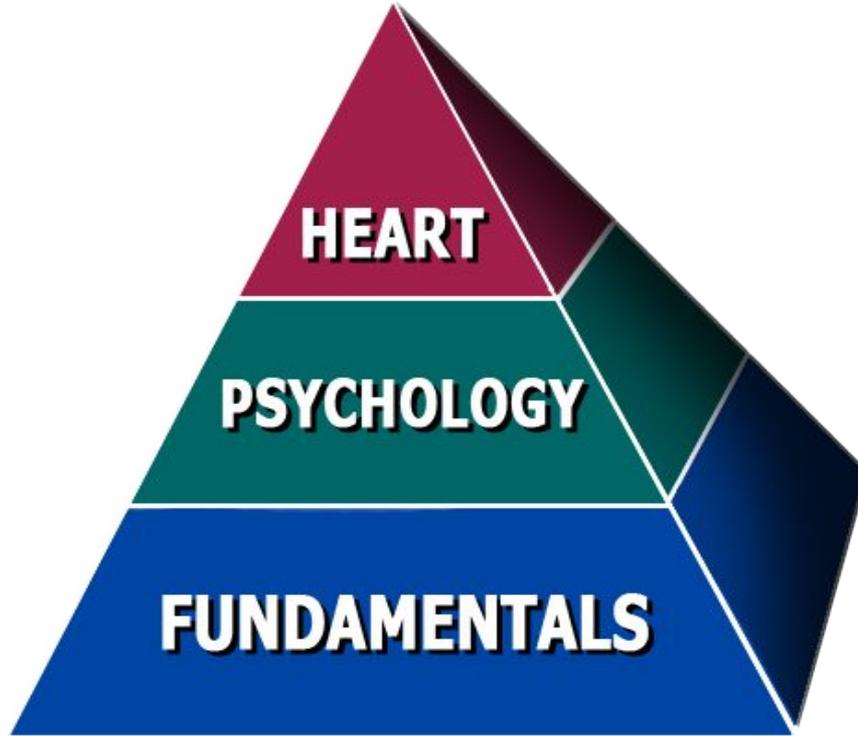
Coach of the Year at City, League, State, Regional and
National Levels

3-D Coaching

From Jeff Duke and the FCA



3-D Coaching



3D Coaching



- 70% of athletes will fail to reach their full potential on & off the field because of 2nd and 3rd Dimension issues
- Research shows 85% of coaches work only in Dimension 1, 15% also do 2D, only 5% 3D

3D Coaching

1st Dimension -- The 1st Dimension is the physical realm of sport and the fundamentals of athlete development. Strength, power, cardiovascular, speed, quickness, technique, repetition, tactics.

2nd Dimension -- The 2nd Dimension is the psychology of sport and connects physical performance to the athlete's mind. Motivation, confidence, emotions, team cohesion, intensity, focus, goal-setting, imagery.

3rd Dimension -- The 3rd Dimension focuses on the attributes of the heart and the integration of those attributes into both the individual practices and the cultural value system of competitive sport. Identity, character, values, self-worth, significance, purpose.

Practical Applications

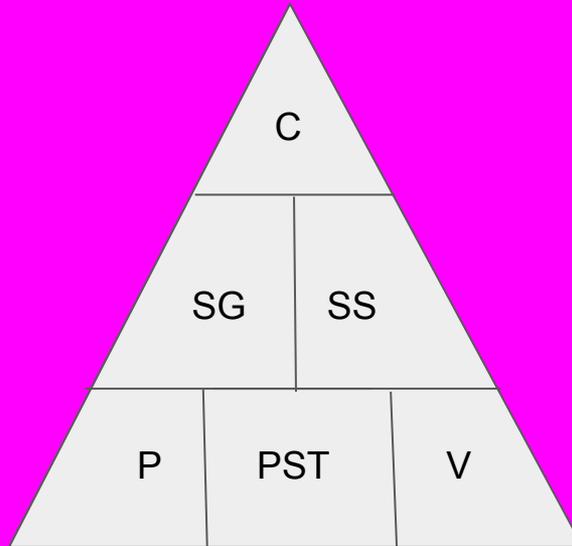
All coaches should emphasize the first dimension, and coach fundamentals, conditioning, techniques, and tactics. We want to be great, and we want to win! This dimension is essential for success!

3D coaches make specific plans and times to accomplish the 2nd dimension. Whether with the entire team or in event groups or on an individual basis, plan for goal-setting sessions, team-building activities, visualization sessions, etc. Also, specifically plan for athletes to have success and build confidence in practice.

The best coaches (only 5%) specifically plan to help individuals grow in character, develop values, and understand their value/self-worth/significance. This is where coaches can leave a lasting legacy that will change lives in a positive way!!!

Track Skills Pyramid

Originally composed by Gary Baskett, Mead High School



Track Skills Pyramid

P = Prioritize. FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS. Wherever you are, be all there. At meets, learn to GO ANIMAL!!!

PST = Positive Self Talk. Psychology Today: up to 70% of our thoughts are negative. Use affirmations/personal mantras (next page). Inner arrogance!

V = Visualization. Picture your success in detail.

SG = Set Goals. We use the SMART method (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound). Use a goal card and mailing stickers.

SS = Be a Self Starter. Give your best even when coach is not around.

C = Act Like a Champion. Sportsmanship/class is the heart of who we are!

PST -- mantras, affirmations, power words

Try repeating phrases to be mentally tough before your next event:

I am calm and aggressive under pressure.

I project confidence and energy.

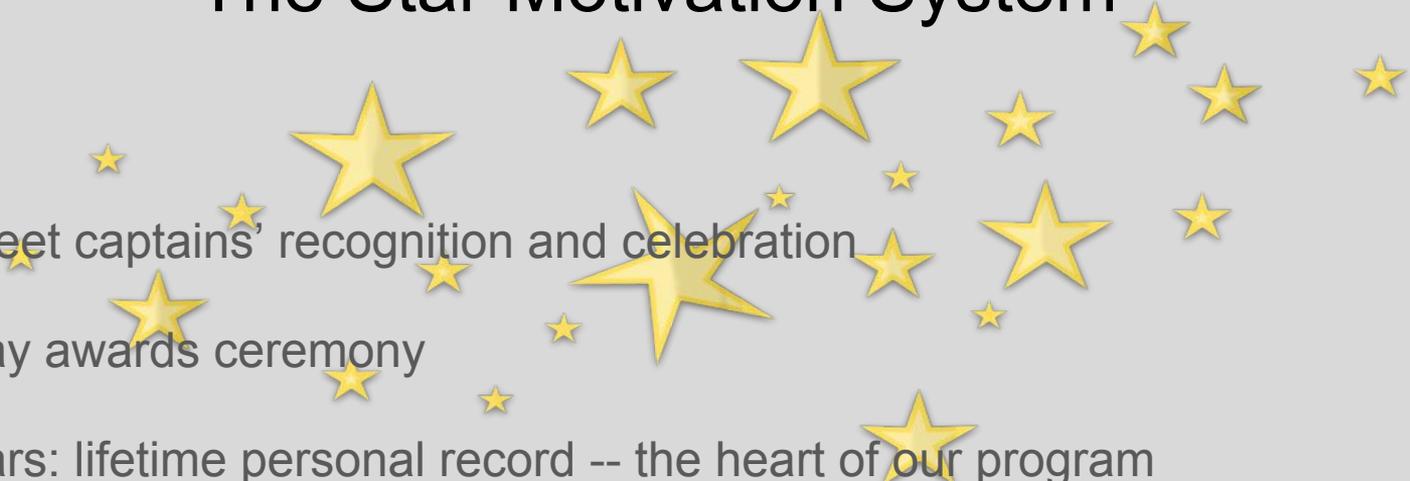
Going fast feels effortless.

I am physically relaxed and mentally focused.

I am a strong, mentally tough runner.

From Competitor.com, Keys to Running with Mental Toughness

The Star Motivation System



Post-meet captains' recognition and celebration

Next day awards ceremony

Red stars: lifetime personal record -- the heart of our program

White stars: winning a varsity event

Gold stars: major accomplishment, including Athlete of the Week, breaking a record, top 8 finish in an invitational, etc.

After team awards, we have a short event recognition time

Obsession with Organization!

Prepare for the season to keep runners motivated and mentally ready

Have a year's plan for practices and meets (developmental, important, crucial)

Explain the purpose of workouts and what should be accomplished

Your runners should have no question about expectations and team rules

Rules of the sport -- we have a “rules day” before the first meet to cover track rules

Coaches' expectations for meet actions and behavior. (No wimping out, no leaving early, support team, no games such as frisbee or soccer during meets, help with hurdles, wear team gear, etc.)

Give information at both league meets and invitationals (plan for everything!) -- before the first meet, we talk about and practice going through everything from the night before through the end of the meet.

At big meets, event coaches come prepared and go through everything -- time schedule, when to warm up, where to check in, how to make finals, etc. Most of our coaches use 3 x 5 cards for each athlete.



Obsession with Organization

Captains' Pre-meet Talk Before the First Meet

The night before (eat right, pack, visualize, plenty of sleep)

What to pack (uniform, competition gear, food/drink, weather prep, etc.)

Preparing to leave and bus behavior

Team warm-up (1 hour before for dual meets, only team lap for invites)

Behavior at the meet (focused, calm, helpful, encouraging to team, etc.)

Compete to win!!!

Sportsmanship and class at the meet (this is who we are!)

Team spirit -- a hallmark of our program!

The bottom line- we do EVERYTHING striving for excellence!

Obsession with Organization

Lists/plans for coaches' organization

Monday meetings throughout the season

Home meet duties -- together we put on AWESOME meets!

Practice plans -- daily, weekly, season, injury alternative plans

Away meet duties -- every coach (20 or so) in charge of things

Head coach duties -- PROGRAM VISION, transportation, budget and purchasing, hiring/firing, meetings, parent issues, scheduling, etc.

Event coaching extra duties: uniform check-out/in, fundraising, t-shirts, community service, social events, social media (athletic.net, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook), etc.

Team schedule -- testing day, rules day, safety day, parent meeting, team warm-up days, Friday game/fun practices, meets, team shopping day, etc.

Race Preparation for Athletes

1. **Boost your confidence through visualization** - formulate a picture of success on race day. Then replay the scenario over and over in your head, even adding how to deal with other scenarios to be totally prepared for a successful race.
2. **Find your optimal arousal zone** -- this is individual rather than team-oriented -- extremely relaxed or really pumped up -- this needs to be recognized and practiced (note my daughters and optimal arousal zone)
3. **Accept negative thoughts and then say goodbye to them** -- top athletes accept that thoughts are not reality -- note them, then reject them and move on.

Race Preparation for Athletes (continued)

4. **Begin your routine early -- include not just race morning, but travel, pre-race routine, relaxation techniques, etc.**
5. **Enjoy the moment! Instead of stressing about the outcome, “focus on the process of racing your best and use the love of the event(s) and the joy of competition as your primary motivation” -- Dr. Jim Afremow on competitor.com.**

From Competitor.com, January 3, 2016

De-stressing Your Runners on Race Day

Focus on performance more than winning (we want to win as individuals and as a team, because trying to win brings out the best in everyone, but coaches should not pressure the athletes). . . Handle losses without drama or trauma.

Let records “come to the athlete” rather than emphasizing them as the coach.

No pep talks, chants or cheers at starting line (sometimes a joke is better, or simply leave them alone).

Know your opponents (scouting report) -- tendencies, strengths, weaknesses.

Know the rules/procedures of the meet, and cover them ahead of time.

Never forget that sports should be fun!!! Coach and athlete should savor the time for the joy of the sport!

Bottom line: have the athletes so physically and mentally prepared, with everything organized, that there is little for them to worry about!

Final Strategies for Mental Preparation

Positive communication from coach to athlete -- be a listener; make track the most positive part of their day!

Your goal as a coach -- EVERY SINGLE ATHLETE FEELS LIKE THIS: COACH FEELS THAT I AM A SPECIAL PERSON!!!!

The old cliché is: Athletes don't care how much you know, if they don't know how much you care. VERY TRUE!!!!!!!!!!!!





Bibliography



Baskett, Gary, Former Track Coach at Mead High School, track and field class curriculum.

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Duke, Jeff. 3D Coach: Capturing the Heart Behind the Jersey. Regal Books, 2014.

Raghunathan, Rag, PhD., “How Negative is Your Mental Chatter?” Psychology Today, October 10, 2013.

Thank you!!!

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