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CHAMPIONSHIP PERFORMANCE

Coaches Corner

Enquist on Instilling a 'Go for It' Mentality

■ College Preview Issue

September 2019 is our 275th anniversary issue. We are making this issue available as a complimentary PDF file to all NCAA head coaches. This is an expanded issue to give those not familiar with the coaches journal a free preview. To order a full subscription, call toll free 1-877-465-3421 or online at championshipperform.com/shop

■ 6 Important Goal Setting Questions

Here are six thought provoking questions to pose to your athletes before the new season starts.

- “What’s your top goal for the first game, first half and over the entire season?”
- “What will be your first steps to reaching those goals?”
- “How will these actions help you meet your goals?”
- “What obstacles might be in your way?”
- “What support do you need?”
- “What happens if you fall short of your goals?”

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Sue Enquist is the former head coach of UCLA women's softball. First as a player and later as a head coach, she was part of 6 national champion teams. In the following interview, she discusses her coaching philosophy.

The will to win. Is it inherent in a player or are there things you can do as a coach to bring that desire out of an individual?

The will to win is present in everyone. The challenge is to teach the student athlete how to unwrap those things that inhibit your will. The most common denominator to inhibit the will is fear. Fear inhibits a player's will to work harder than everyone else because if I do, I will be responsible for the outcome. The most vulnerable thing an athlete can do is to do everything right. The challenge for athletes in this generation is to be freed up by giving it everything they have. Ultimately, if they lose a game, you win the process. At the end of the day, if you can win the process, the game usually ends up being extremely fun and successful.

At UCLA, there are 3 entities: Our-selves, the opponent, and the game. Those 3 factors interact all throughout practice preparation and competition. If I can get my athletes to focus on the game and ourselves, they will learn to love creating that strong will to win each and every day. You don't minimize your opponent – you get educated about them, but they are simply a player in this triangle. Other than educating ourselves on their defensive schemes and a pre-set strategy on the pitcher we will face, we don't focus a lot on them.

Do you ever change the way you are preparing a team during the season if things aren't going as planned?

At the core, the first thing is they want to have fun. We know it's not fun if you don't win. Winning and fun go hand in hand. You're not going to have fun and win if you can't physically execute. Our conditioning and training hold up that trampoline of fun and winning. You can sometimes do all the right things and not get the end result so you want. In that case, it's my job to remind the team of the things that they are doing right.

Here's an example. In 2005, we were top 3 in the country at the beginning of the season. We were defending champions and we ended up playing selfish softball, in my opinion, to start the year. Instead of hitting the ball to the right side and moving runners, we tried to hit home runs and collectively collapsed as a team and dropped to thirteenth.

Never in the history of our program had we dropped so far. But then the team collectively started to see we need to recover and get back to what made us great which was process based goals, team goals, and team softball. What does that mean? Having the mindset of purposely wanting to put the ball in play on the right side of the infield or the outfield to advance that runner.

Early on we would get so frustrated and just try to hack our way out of our previous failure of not getting the bunt down. So here's what would happen: In the dugout, I would have lists of goals they could check off.

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Urban Meyer's On Edge Teaching Style

Urban Meyer is all about finding the most efficient ways to educate his players about the intricacies of his high-powered offense. What he hit upon is an approach that is increasingly popular in academic circles, but still mostly unheard of in the world of football coaching: flipping the classroom.

In academia, flipped learning turns the traditional classroom-teaching model on its head, delivering lessons online outside of class and moving homework into the classroom via individual tutoring or activities.

In an effort to speed up the installation of his spread-option playbook - Meyer decided to abandon old-school chalkboard sessions. Instead, he

devoted team meetings to hands-on exercises, such as walking through plays and doing situational drills.

Meyer doesn't use the flipped classroom term to describe his approach, but outlined his belief in **"on-edge" teaching, in which players are kept on the edge of their seats during team meetings by a barrage of impromptu quizzes and individual interactions designed to keep them engaged.**

This approach is fundamentally the same as in flipped learning, which has become something of a buzzword in recent years as online video has become more widely available.

The theory behind it is that introducing student-athletes to new material through short video lectures or online slideshows outside of class time allows for the lower levels of thought work—gaining knowledge and comprehension—to be performed outside the classroom on their own schedule and at their own pace. Class time can then be repurposed into workshops where students can inquire about the material and interact with hands-on activities. These help accomplish the harder task of assimilating knowledge.

The whole idea is that if you can *get players thinking about it and doing the mental work prior to being in the football facility*, your time in the classroom will be that much more productive.

For Meyer, that has meant ditching the time-honored method of installing an offense, in which players listen passively while coaches draw up plays during team meetings before heading back to their dorm rooms to memorize the assignments with their playbooks.

Now, instead of lecturing players on

X's and O's, **Ohio State coaches send them schemes and game plans via videos and interactive graphics that can be accessed on phones and iPads.** Time at the facility is then devoted to walk-throughs and other interactive exercises. Kirk Barton, a graduate assistant at Ohio State, says meetings are used for situation-specific drilling. He might ask an offensive lineman to diagram a particular play against a particular defensive front, for instance, or draw up their responsibilities against a blitz. Barton says he also **texts players outside of meetings to ensure they have the assignments nailed down.**

Former Buckeyes player Johnathan Hankins said it isn't uncommon for Meyer to interrupt meetings and pepper inexperienced players with questions to ensure they understood the playbook.

"When he came in, he would usually ask a freshman: 'What do you got?'" said Hankins, adding that Meyer's "on-edge" techniques ensured no one put their feet up during meetings. "You never knew what you were going to get from coach Meyer. That's just how he is. He's always keeping people on their toes."

Excerpted from the book: The Football Coach's Game Plan for Leadership: Interviews with Football Legends, Detailed Organizational Plans and Coaching Strategies to Build Your Team's Leadership Culture.

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Keep Winning Attitude During Losing Time

Down years. Rebuilding seasons. Injuries to key players that turn a great team into an average one. How can you keep your athletes interested and motivated during losing seasons?

The key is to give athletes other “small victories” and other chances to win in different ways. Winning teams overcome obstacles. Most of the time the primary obstacle a team or athlete is measured against is the opponent.

How can individuals and teams win when the scoreboard says they lost the game or match? One method is to create different obstacles and let the other team be part of your “game.”

Example: A tennis coach whose team had lost 4 straight matches devised a plan. Since the skill level of his players was weak, overcoming certain obstacles during their matches were their way of “winning”. If a player got 70 percent of their first serves in, they considered the match a success, no matter what the final score was.

Example 2: An undersized basketball team was getting beat quite handily by their bigger and faster opponents. The coach decided to focus on their free throw percentage and field goal percentage. On defense, she noted how many points each opponent was averaging and if one of her defenders limited that opponent to less than her average, it was considered a victory.

By using different criteria to judge performance besides wins and losses, athletes can feel they have gained or accomplished something in a losing effort. Small “moral victories” boost confidence. Motivation increases when the player feels they have something to play for other than a championship or title.

Note: It’s important to never accept losing as inevitable. That’s a destructive mind set as well. But

during the rebuilding process, small victory steps lead to greater future rewards.

What are other methods of motivating players during a losing campaign? Find something after each loss and tell the team what it was. Never accept sloppy practice or lackadaisical play which leads to a “we’re going to lose anyway mentality”. This type of thinking will never allow a team to turn things around.

Another idea includes changing practice schedules. Occasionally let team captains plan a practice or encourage them to develop new drills for technique work.

From your standpoint, never give the impression that you have lost hope or given up on the team during a tough season. You may have to look harder, but there are silver linings in losing years.

One last area to consider here. What about the player who gets depressed, even to the point of feeling worthless during a losing year. Particularly with women’s teams, self-worth spirals down with each successive loss.

Remind these players that the self-thoughts of “winning” athletes are defined by how close they came to reaching their potential during the season. This is how they should evaluate their performances instead only looking at wins and losses.

If they perform consistently well in a losing effort, you are in the best place to analyze shortcomings. Goals may have to be adjusted, but the athlete’s self-esteem is still intact. Process, rather than outcome, goals are important during these type of years. It helps keeps wins and losses in proper perspective.

Winning Ways

■ Recruiting Tip on Parent Behavior

Northwestern basketball coach Chris Collins has an interesting recruiting evaluation technique. Throughout the recruiting process, Collins says he observes parents in the stands to help identify the sort of environment the recruit grew up with. In the recruiting process, coaches should begin to notice if parents are supportive and positive, or negative while encouraging individualistic behavior that only regards their son or daughter rather than the entire team. Take these parent sideline behaviors into account when recruiting athletes so they know who they are dealing with moving forward.

■ Watch Out for Information Overload

In a televised game, a football team was shown in the locker room before a game getting last minute instructions from the coach. On the white board were listed 8 keys to victory. Underneath the main points, were additional sub-points. This resulted in information overload by the team in question and they ended up losing a close game.

Moral: Pre-game keys should contain no more than 3 basic points to consider. More than that, and you get a team that is reacting instead of performing in the flow.

■ Negative Recruiting: A Dangerous Game

Several high school athletes were interviewed for a story to discuss the ups and downs of being a highly recruited star. One comment that kept coming up was that the kids were turned off by negative recruiting tactics. It’s one thing to tell someone that another school already has too many players at one position, but it is quite another to rip the coaching staffs of other schools.

The consensus from the players interviewed was the coaching staffs should focus on what their program had to offer and unless a recruit brought up a specific issue that needed to be answered to stay away from overtly knocking other schools.

12 Ways to Improve Concentration

The following article gives specific bullet suggestions on how to improve attentional focus or concentration.

- The attentional demands for each specific skill in your sport should be analyzed by you and your athletes. You should identify whether the attention should be internal or external, and how broad or narrow it should be.
- When attention is focused externally, teach your athletes what cues should be attended to in what order. Keep the cues as few and as discernible as possible.
- When attention is focused internally, attend to positive and constructive thoughts, and leave negative thoughts unattended.
- When actually performing the skill, attend to the present and immediate forthcoming action, not to the past or future.
- Focus on task factors such as form and execution rather than on the score or the pending outcome. Athletes cannot concentrate on two different

things at the same time. If athletes are focusing on the goal, they cannot concentrate on the means. In other words, if athletes are thinking about winning, they cannot be thinking about hitting the next pitch, shooting the ball into the hoop, blocking the punt, or hitting an ace serve.

- Help athletes develop mind sets or expectations about which cues to attend to and which ones to filter out. Then teach them the appropriate responses to these cues.
- In conjunction with developing mind sets, teach your athletes the cues that help them to anticipate certain responses, and then analyze when it is appropriate to make anticipatory responses.
- When learning skills, direct athletes' attention to the feelings and sensations in their muscles as they execute them. Attending to these kinesthetic cues increases the rate at which athletes learn skills, and imagery is an excellent means of teaching kinesthetic awareness.

- When practicing, do attention-demanding instructional activity early in the practice period when psychic energy levels are high.
- Minimize distractions during practice when athletes are first learning skills, but then later introduce contest-simulated distractions so that athletes can practice their attentional skills.
- When the environment contains a great deal of uncertainty, especially uncertainty that athletes may perceive as a threat to their self-worth, the situation stresses them and increases the tendency to be distracted.
- Although uncertainty about athletes' self-worth is undesirable, uncertainty that introduces variety and novelty in practices can keep interest, and therefore attention, higher. In a word, keep them guessing and challenge their ability to concentrate in practice as much as possible.

Analysis of One of Sports Greatest Upsets

Possibly the biggest upset in the history of college basketball took place when tiny Chaminade College from Hawaii beat Virginia, then the number one team with the number one player, 77-72.

How the upset happened gives insight and hope for coaches looking to do the same today. First Virginia took Chaminade for granted. For most of the team, it was chance to go on a Hawaiian vacation, not a business trip. It was easy to see why. They had the best team on paper (featuring center Ralph Sampson) and were ranked accordingly. What was there to fear from a tiny private NAIA school?

Coach Merv Lopes said things like, "If you're small enough but good enough,

you are big enough." The mental side of athletics always fascinated Coach Lopes. He started to work meditation into his practice.

On the week of the big game he guided the team through a meditation exercise that included explaining the game tactics he wanted to implement: "Swarm Sampson every time he touches the ball on defense, get the ball into the hands of the hot shooter on offense, etc."

He then used some individual "psych up" strategies for different players:

"What is the difference between you and Rick Carlisle?" he asked swingman Richard Haenisch. "Can he jump higher

than you? Can he run faster than you?" - Haenisch shook his head no at each question. Lopes continued: "The difference is in your brain. The game is played between the shoulders. The guy who gives 2 percent more is going to win. Two percent isn't that much. If Carlisle takes three steps, you take 3 and 1/2. If you keep doing that, it will make a difference."

Finally, he got to Tony Randolph, who had the near impossible task of guarding Sampson and giving up 10 inches in the process: "Tony, just go out there and play ball. Show people that this is an exciting game. Just go out and have some fun."

No mention of winning the game, but they did and made history in the process.

6 Core Values of Champion Yale Lacrosse

Here are Advisory Board member and performance consultant Brian Cain's 6 lessons he learned from working with the Yale University Lacrosse team.

1. KNOW WHO YOU ARE. Great organizations, teams and individuals have a strong set of core values. The core values of Yale Lacrosse are the foundation of the program and were on display all weekend by the players and the staff. Values give you a direction, provide you with a foundation to build from, and offer a safety net when you fall. Their 6 keys are: 1. Accountability 2. Motor/Energy 3. Physical and Mental Toughness 4. Brotherhood 5. Trust 6. Confidence

2. HAVE A MOTTO TO SAY AND BE A MODEL FOR OTHERS TO SEE. Head Coach Andy Shay and his staff modeled the values of the program all weekend. They reminded me of the importance of leadership having a motto to say to help refocus and rally the troops, and the importance of the leader being a model of values for others to see.

3. FOCUS ON THE NEXT 200 FEET. In athletics and in life, the tendency is to look forward to the result of what might happen. The key to performing at your best is to stay committed and locked into the next 200 feet. Remember, you can drive anywhere in the country you want in complete darkness if you simply stay focused on the next 200 feet of the road. In lacrosse the next 200 feet is the next possession; in life it may be what you do in the next hour after

reading this. How good can you be at what you are doing in the next hour of your life? Can you make it the best hour of your day? Make this hour better than it has ever been before? What is your next 200 feet?

4. WORK THE CUT. On the eve of the biggest fight in what seems to be boxing history, the Bulldogs found themselves in the fight of their lives vs. Brown. Down 6-2 early in the second half, Bulldog players kept their composure and reminded each other of the importance of working the cut. In boxing, most fans look for the knockout. What the champions know is that to win the fight you have to work the cut.

Working the cut is an analogy for staying the course, sticking to your game plan when you take a punch, and not letting the assault of your opponent take you out of your game. You have to keep landing your jab (or in lacrosse, win ground balls), make simple passes and communicate – and as you keep working the cut, your opponent will get metaphorical blood in his/her eyes, and then you take the KO when it comes.

Working the cut is about small, simple wins along the way that lead up to the big finish and the desired result. What is working the cut for you today to help you win the fight of being at your best today?

5. WHAT IS vs. WHAT IF. When you care deeply about the people on your team and have your back against the wall, where if you lose and your

season may come to a close, there is a tendency to focus on "What If." *What if we win, who will we play? What if we lose, will we play again? What if I don't play my best?*

In competition, "what if" kills. In competition, champions focus on "what is." They focus on the moment and recognize when their mind drifts away from the moment and they quickly reset back to the NOW. Today, keep your mind in the moment and stay locked into what is to avoid the trap of what if.

6. REASONS BEFORE RESULTS. Everyone wants results. The problem is that when you think about results you sabotage your ability to perform. Rather than focus on results, focus on reasons. Why do you love doing what you do? Why do you love who you do it with? Why do you compete? When you have a big enough reason why, you will always find a way how. Start with why.

When you can answer why you do what you do, the results will come faster because you will be able to manage the emotions of the moment and deal with the adversity that makes life so great.

Brian Cain of Brian Cain Peak Performance is available for a limited number of speaking and consulting relationships.

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You have to get to the point in your athletic career when going for it is more important than winning and losing.

Arthur Ashe, Tennis Legend

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Write an Athlete Visualization Program

Note: the following article is addressed directly to athletes.

There are a few points to consider before you write an imagery and visualization training program for yourself to practice. First, how does your competition begin? What happens when you are warming up and stretching? Be aware of the competition area, the crowd, and the general environment. The beginning part of your visualization should also include focusing on your goal and the outcome you wish to achieve. It should include everything important up to the moment you begin to physically compete.

The middle part of the visualization should consist of the event itself: every move you will make, all your strategy, everything up to the finish or conclusion of the event. All the thoughts feelings, physical moves, pains, sounds and reactions should be included.

The final part encompasses all that happens after you have competed. This may include shouts of the crowd, your warm down, your victory lap around the stadium, your post game handshakes and greetings, and rejoining the team in the locker room and finally leaving the competitive arena.

Recommendation: Here is a 10 step guideline to writing your own visualization: 1) Ask yourself, what do you see, hear, and feel when performing your event? Write it down.

2) Dictate into a recording device every detail from number one.

3) Begin with arriving at the event, going through your normal preparatory routine and the few minutes before you perform.

4) Go into vivid detail about the event and your experience of it, including sounds, smells, colors, the crowd, weather, and the positive feelings about your body and mental state.

5) Imagine yourself being totally relaxed, confident, powerful, and in

complete control of your mind and body. Include affirmations and key words that will help keep yourself under emotional control during your real performance.

6) Go through your whole event thinking of each significant point or play. Feel yourself moving smoothly and performing with strength and endurance.

7) When writing your visualization, make sure to include statements that remind you of your mental toughness, power and confidence.

8) Next, re-read and edit your visualization. Then dictate it yourself or possibly have someone else whose voice you like dictate some parts or even an entire recording for you. *(Editor's note: Most colleges have radio announcers. Ask your coach if they could say a few great statements describing your play then put it on your recording.)*

9) Listen to the recorded version for flaws and make changes as needed. Once you are satisfied with the script, add a part at the beginning that includes some things that make you feel relaxed or upbeat (possibly some music or other sounds like applause.)

10) Once you have perfected the recording, listen to it at least 3 or 4 times a week before an event. Pick a quiet time and place where you won't be disturbed. First thing in the morning or before going to bed at night are usually good times. Try to stay awake to get the full effect. Sitting up is helpful. The ideal state to listen is when relaxed, but mentally aware.

P.S. Do not listen while driving.

Excerpted from the book "The Mental Athlete" by Kay Porter, Ph.D. www.thementalathlete.com

■ Peak Performance Bullets

■ Parents and the Issue of Playing Time

Situation: A player's parents want to know why it is fair to bring up a freshman or sophomore to play in front of their daughter, who is a senior and has worked hard and had a good attitude. What is the best way to handle this?"

High School coach Lisa Christiansen says the best way to handle this situation is to prevent it from happening.

"In my pre-season meeting with players and parents, I explain that excellence is the goal for our program and that a player's age rarely influences my playing time decisions.

I explain the Double-Goal Coaching model, where the first goal is winning, and the second, and more-important goal is life lessons through sports. I encourage them to be "Second-Goal Parents," who look at the big picture and understand the roles that they and the coaches play in teaching lessons that will lead to success in life beyond sports.

If you have not explained your playing-time criteria and you are now facing these questions about "fairness," you may need to have some difficult conversations. You will need to explain your criteria, emphasizing a meritocracy.

Be prepared to specify the measures you are judging, such as statistics, effort in practice, or team chemistry, and be able to provide a mix of examples illustrating where the player meets or exceeds your criteria and where she falls short. Avoid direct comparisons between the senior in question and any of her teammates."

Enquist on Instilling Go For It Mentality, cont.

One set of goals was really process-oriented goals. These were goals that we all knew we could be successful at. They didn't even involve the opponent. For example, when you are at bat, the player would take two deep breaths. That has nothing to do with getting a hit or not.

We were able to do things regarding tempo. I wanted them three times in a game to call a timeout and reconvene in the infield when they saw a momentum shift. These were things we could be very good at and feel good about taking control of our game.

I wanted to change the negative self-talk to positive images. I took all our positive self-talk words and printed them, laminated them and posted them all over the dugout in the last third of the season. I wanted them to see words and say those words in their head constantly so we could get to the point where we would start being more positive, and start playing team softball.

When we started to do that, we weren't winning right away, but we were playing better. Instead of looking at our team batting average, I wanted them to look at our advancing runner stats. So we began to break our game down into the simplest terms like advancing a runner. So a player could ground out, but did she move a girl from first to second? There are different ways to look at success.

Our team batting average was .250 moving runners from second to third, but our team stat from moving first to second was .390. So I asked them: "Were you putting pressure on yourself?", "Are you getting overconfident?" I told them not put a greater value on advancing the runner at second.

So you're telling me you can hit .390 moving her from first to second, but you can only hit .250 from second to third. So what is going on there? Have the same mind-set like you are trying to advance the runner from first. They hung on to that philosophy and it literally carried us through the post-season all the way to the championship game.

Have you ever done anything from a motivational standpoint that didn't work out as you thought it would?

There are tons of instances when things haven't worked out. Softball is a failure sport, so we were always trying to find new ways to motivate the athletes. There is usually a theme that coaches need to be aware of. There are two types of motivation. A foundation of our program is that the athletes are internally motivated. Each player must figure out what gets her going everyday. We spend time on knowing themselves and what's important for them. But you can't have just internal motivation. We live in an externally stimulated culture. If you sing the song – play hard, enjoy the struggle and the satisfaction in knowing you have done your best – you won't get everything you need from your athletes.

When trying to motivate externally, I constantly throw out challenges to the team to see how they will react. Every single day, I put pressure on the team and the individual.

Here is an example: At practice one day, they knew that suicide bunt challenge was on the line. This means that 13 out of the 14 hitters have to put the bunt down. The reward of completing this may be less running or a social event where they do something fun as a group. This day, 12 out of 14 laid the bunt down. Their favorite come back is 'double or nothing.' We have two specialized runners on the team who do a lot of training on their own within the team. I picked one of them as having to make the bunt. The team said, "No fair coach." My reply: "The game is not fair. How are you going to handle the situation?"

So the team all gets together with this pinch runner and gives her a quick pep talk on how to get the bunt down. They tell her to use positive self-talk and wait until she is ready for the pitch. This freshman with all the pressure on her put down a bunt that could have won a world series game.

After that drill, I asked them what was the lesson learned? Good talent combined with a different attitude can do anything. Good talent is flexible because the season will offer so many different challenges. That's a motivational drill that worked. There were many similar ones where the team simply didn't get the lesson.

What happens in those times?

I might have changed the rules during an exercise and they then excuse me of cheating. The lesson I was trying to convey went over their heads and gets lost sometimes. So the next week, I will introduce a new motivation to sell the lesson to be learned a different way or fashion.

Sometimes you have to be honest with your team. When you introduce challenges into your practice routine that don't work, you need to be honest and tell them, 'hey, this didn't work.' This shows accountability on the coaches' side – which is also very important.

For example, "Today, we tried drill a b and c. The purpose was to learn such and such lesson. Well it didn't work. My goal next week is to try things differently that will illustrate the lesson we want you to learn."

This way, they know that we aren't perfect either. The goal is to have a good level of communication with your players without being their best friend. I tell them, 'When you go through those chain link fences, you need to separate the rest of your day from practice. You can escape for 3 hours and have a bundle of fun.'

One last thought: You have to enable the athlete to enjoy 'going for it.' If you can get them so focused on 'going for it' and not worrying about the results part, you are on your way to peak performance.

Excerpted from the book - "Winning the Athletic Mental Game: 33 Interviews with America's Top Coaches and Performance Psychologist on Gaining Your Competitive Edge."

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John Calipari's 5 Important Recruiting Rules

Next month, we'll take a look at the coaching philosophy of John Calipari. This month we look at 5 keys that make him a great recruiter.

What is his secret? He doesn't have some special spiel he gives or a line that always works. Instead, his philosophy is an adaptation off the John F. Kennedy approach: he doesn't ask what the recruit can do for him; he asks what he can do for the recruit.

"You have to know what (the recruit's) dreams and aspirations are, and chase those with them," Calipari said. "I'm trying to help them succeed, so we become one of the places where everyone wants to work."

However, one thing Calipari avoids is promising anything to a recruit or their family. While he tries to do everything he can to help his recruits succeed, the last thing he wants is for their expectations not to be met.

"With social media, (all the recruits) talk to each other," Calipari said. "So we don't promise outlandish things. Because, if you do and they don't come true, you are going to run out of people pretty quick."

#1) You have to know the people you recruit.

When he was an assistant coach at Kansas University early in his career, Calipari used to tell prospects how great it is to go to a big university like Kansas, because you can major in anything. To hammer home his point, he would say the only three majors Kansas doesn't offer is forestry, farming and veterinary medicine, three majors few recruits were interested in.

One day, he was sent to recruit a player named Roy Brow, and gave his speech about the (almost) unlimited opportunity at Kansas, except for those three majors. Of course, after hearing the spiel, Brow was quick to tell him what he wanted to major in: veterinary medicine.

Calipari hasn't made the same mistake

again. Now, before he meets with a prospect, **he finds out exactly what they are looking for in a career. And then, when talking with them, he offers a path on how exactly that can happen.**

"I ask them, what do you want out of your college experience, where do you want basketball to take you?" he said. "And then, from there, I'm doing everything I can to help them succeed."

#2) Honesty is key.

That said, Calipari never promises playing time or NBA stardom to his recruits, only opportunity. In fact, since Calipari gets so many great players to go to Kentucky, often some of the best players in the country play less on his team than they normally would somewhere else.

Calipari is also admittedly hard on his players and added that playing at Kentucky can be difficult; as there's so much media attention it's like "being under a microscope." If Kentucky doesn't win a national title, its considered a failure, despite dozens of other great college basketball teams sharing the same goal. And sometimes that honesty means directly **telling a great talent they won't be a good fit for Kentucky, and the reasons why.**

"The last thing you want is someone who isn't going to thrive in your system," he said. "The more they fail, those results begin to hurt your recruitment."

#3) If someone moves on, don't forget about them.

He said he's more proud of the dozens of players he sent to the pros than his one NCAA championship victory.

That fits in line with his general attitude of doing what he can for his players, even after they leave Kentucky. He related it to the business world, saying a company should be "ecstatic" if one of its employees got a great job somewhere else.

Additionally, Calipari often hires his former players and coaches to his own staff, years after they ever played or worked for

him. Of course, the bigger reason he does that is because he believes they're right for the job, but he also knows that loyalty will pay off down the line.

"Are you taking care of people on the way out?" Calipari said. "Or is all just about what they can do for you? That's all part of recruiting."

#4) Calipari's fourth rule of recruiting: social media is your friend.

Calipari frequently updates on both Twitter and Facebook accounts. Why? For him, it's a way to get the real Calipari out, without the filter of the mainstream media. Going back to his point of being honest, the more he can show the world what the real John Calipari is like, the more likely he is to get recruits who are a good fit.

"Social media, if you are not doing it, you are already losing," he said. "If you are doing it, it's more or less to be transparent."

#5) The most important rule of recruiting: follow the golden rule.

Ultimately though, what it comes down to is treating people the right way, Calipari said. If you are honest, if you legitimately help people achieve their dreams and if keep a good relationship with them after they leave, you are going to have a successful organization.

When Calipari first started as a coach at the University of Massachusetts in 1989, he obviously had no reputation to point to. So, he "sold hopes and dreams," and managed to have a relatively successful tenure there:

"It's bigger than me just coming in and I'm going to sell you," Calipari said. "It's about the relationships I've had with the players who have come through my program. And that's going to feed off itself."

Please email comments, questions, story ideas or address changes to info@championshipperform.com. We want and value your feedback!

Player Post-Game Evals Improve Performance

Coaches and athletes must deal with the fact all games end with a team's performance falling (more or less) into one of the following categories: 1) *Won and played well.* 2) *Won but played poorly.* 3) *Lost and played well.* 4) *Lost and played poorly.* Given the above four conditions, is there a constructive method when debriefing a team so players will utilize the just-ended contest as a learning experience?

Athletes will be prone to openly demonstrate anger and disappointment following a game when their team plays poorly. These exaggerated postmortems are non-constructive, expressed with negative emotion and mostly inaccurate. They distort the coach and players' perceptions of what actually took place on the court or field. Fueled by negative emotion, the coach may also inaccurately attribute the team's poor play or loss to factors, after careful analysis, had a minimal impact on the team's performance.

Immediately following a game, especially after a poor team performance,

coaches should address psychological needs, e.g. leaving alone those who prefer to be left alone, reassuring those who need confidence boosted, and ensuring no one gets "too down" or sullen. Denigrating personal remarks made to specific team members add to the inaccurate self-assessment of factors responsible for a poor performance. Even more important, it leads players to attribute their poor performance to factors far removed from the "reality of the situation."

In setting up an effective post game debriefing program, coaches usually have two common objectives across all sports: 1. Improve individual performance. 2. Utilize the just completed game as a tool to prepare for the next contest.

Recommendation: Have players fill out an evaluation form a few hours following a game to rate how they performed. You can tailor this form to criteria of your choosing. A meeting can be held the following day to discuss the player's performance with the coach. At this meeting the coach can modify individual performance

attributions and interact with the players in a positive and rational manner as sufficient time has elapsed to be objective.

For example, if the player is inaccurately self-critical, by utilizing the checklist *coaches can objectively evaluate performance and place the negative aspects in proper context.* Video review can be used here for supporting the positive. The coach can also give the team a written analysis, which stresses positive execution, while constructively stating areas that need to be improved.

The next day's meeting, with one to one consultation, video review, and written analysis by both coaches and athletes will be 100% more effective than any post-game session immediately following a contest.

Excerpted from the book *Championship Performance Coaching Volume 2: 200 Plus Practical, Proven Sports Psychology and Team Building Strategies to Win More This Season*

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John Wooden's 7 Keys to Great Practice

1. *Fundamentals before creativity:* Coach Wooden believed the teaching of fundamentals, until they are all executed quickly, properly, and without conscious thought, is a prerequisite to playing the game. Drills must be created so that all of the fundamentals are taught to the criterion that players execute them automatically. In Coach Wooden's words: "Drilling created a foundation on which individual initiative and imagination can flourish."

2. *Use variety.* [At UCLA], although the general skeleton of practice lessons were the same, there were lots of surprises that kept things interesting and fun. Coach Wooden "would devise new [drills] to prevent monotony, although there would be some drills we must do every single day."

3. *Teaching new material.* When creat-

ing the daily lesson plan, Coach Wooden was careful to **install new material in the first half of practice, not the second.** There were two reasons for this: Our minds were fresh and not yet worn down by two hours of high-intensity activities, and he could devise activities during the second half of practice for the application of new material.

4. *Quick transitions.* During Coach Wooden's practice sessions, one witnessed lightning-quick transitions from activity to activity. Players sprinted to the next area and took pride in being the first to begin. Transitions were as intense as the activities. No time was wasted. With a little ingenuity, creativity, and organization, classrooms can be morphed from inefficient operations to efficient systems.

5. *Increasing complexity.* Drills evolved

from simple to extremely complex and demanding. Every movement, every action was carefully thought out and planned.

6. *Conditioning.* Coach Wooden's philosophy was for players and students to improve a little every day and make perfection the goal. His method for improving conditioning included one painful demand - each player, when reaching the point of exhaustion, was to push himself beyond. When this is done every day, top conditioning will be attained over time.

7. *Avoid altering a plan during the lesson.* Once the practice started, Coach Wooden never changed it, even though he may have noticed an existing drill that needed more time or thought of a new one he should have included. The proper place for new ideas and improvements was on the back of the 3 x 5 index card, which he made notations on.

The Impact of Caffeine on Athletic Performance

U.S. swimmer Elizabeth Beisel did something a little crazy at the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. Before the biggest races of her life, she tried a performance-enhancing substance: coffee. The results were electric. She swam two personal-best times and won a silver.

At first, coffee's impact was "100% physical. I could truly feel the effects on me," recalls Ms. Beisel, who will compete in the Olympics this summer. "Now, it may be more mental than it is physical. It's just become part of my routine."

It aids athletic performance, research shows, yet it is completely legal. One note for athletes considering coffee or caffeinated drinks before performance. They will get the biggest boost if they don't drink caffeine every day. Once the body gets used to a substance, the performance benefit is minimal. If they wait, say a week, between caffeine uses, the bump can be more substantial.

Caffeine is most effective in short-burst need for team speed. Recent research suggests that even small doses of caffeine, equivalent to what's in a "tall" Starbucks, can improve athletic performance.

"I'd say at the elite level, the majority of athletes use caffeine," says Steve Magness, cross-country coach at the University of Houston and author of "The Science of Running." Many dietary supplements are unproven, Mr. Magness says, but caffeine "just consistently, repeatedly works."

Research shows caffeine can confer a **1% to 2% benefit**, he says. That's significant for competitive margins measured in seconds or fractions of a second.

About a third of the more than 80 sports drinks and snacks from Gu Energy Labs, of Berkeley, Calif., have caffeine. TrueStart Coffee sells premium freeze-dried coffee with a standardized caffeine level for use by athletes.

Triathletes, cyclists and rowers showed the highest levels of caffeine use, and gymnasts the lowest. (Perhaps coffee jitters and the balance beam don't mix. For any sport where an athlete experiences pre-game jitters, caffeine is most likely not recommended.)

Research scientist Dr. Del Coso conducted about a dozen studies on caffeine's effects in stop-and-start sports such as tennis and basketball. He put athletes through sports-related tests, such as squatting and jumping for volleyball players, and measured their performance. Athletes who drank caffeine jumped a little higher and ran a little faster than athletes who drank a similar but decaffeinated beverage.

In simulated soccer games, as recorded on GPS trackers, players who drank a caffeinated beverage sprinted more often and ran further overall during a match.

Some athletes don't respond to caffeine, and it affects some more than others, researchers have found.

The potential downsides of moderate caffeine use include gastrointestinal distress, sleep problems, anxiety and nervousness.

"I would argue that caffeine is at the low end of everything that can have side effects," says Lawrence Spriet, co-author of the 2013 book "*Caffeine for Sports Performance*."

Caffeine doses higher than 6 mg per kilogram increase the chances of side effects while providing minimal performance improvements, Dr. Del Coso says. (Note: 3 mg of caffeine is included in small Starbucks coffee. So it would be seem that with more than two cups of coffee the benefits of the caffeine decreases.)

Gary Hall Jr., the 10-time U.S. Olympic medalist, recalls having several espressos each day during his swimming career starting in the mid-1990s, even on days he didn't swim. He says he avoided coffee before evening races to prevent sleep problems and nerves.

On the other side of the caffeine debate, Ms. Beisel drinks a cup before every race. Ahead of the Olympics, she says she's trying to cut back a few days before a competition to clear her body, "just so when I do race, it's like that feeling when you have your first sip of coffee in a while."

Excerpted from a report by Rachel Bachman in the Wall St. Journal www.wsj.com

Olympic Coach David Marsh on Female Motivation

When David Marsh was the head coach of the men's and women's swim teams at Auburn, his women had just finished the first day of a three-day meet that would decide the national championship. They had never won a national title before, but they were in the lead and flying high.

Let's really motivate them for the final two days, Marsh and his staff decided. So they had a mock banner designed for the team meeting that night proclaiming the Auburn women's team as national champions and then unveiled it to the women.

"And we couldn't have swum worse the next day," Marsh said. "There were tears all over the pool deck. We had projected an outcome, making it more about results than relationships. It was ridiculous."

Marsh recently coached the US Women's Olympic team. He doesn't coach men and women the same way. The most important one lesson comes down to the fact that most female swimmers value relationships over results.

"The magic happens when they all get along," Marsh said. "And they also want to hear from people they trust. With the men, they often want to hear from just anybody who will jack them up a little bit. *With the women, if they don't trust you, you can't motivate them.*"

According to Olympian Katie Meili: "It's a lot more of a relationship between you and the coaches. You have to be your own advocate sometimes. When I would come to practice at first, I'd say, 'What am I going to do work on today?' And David would say, 'I don't know. What do you think you need to work on?' At first I didn't get it. I'd say, 'Well, you're the coach! Tell me.' But then I realized it was a smart way to do things and allowed me to be my own advocate."

Marsh likes to call his coaching "athlete-centered," and that goes for both his male and female swimmers. He doesn't make the athlete conform to his training; he shapes his training around the athlete.

For the Olympic team, Marsh decided to use some icebreakers to speed the

team building process during nightly meetings.

The most popular game involved the swimmers splitting into two teams on opposite sides of the room. A sheet would be held up in the middle of the room to block each group from viewing the other, then each team would pick one swimmer to stand up on either side of the sheet.

Then the sheet was dropped. The contest, once the swimmers saw each other, was simple: Which of the two could more quickly blurt out the other swimmer's primary event in the Olympics? The winner got to "steal" the loser for her team.

"It was supposed to be a five-minute game," Marsh said, and they ended up doing it for 30-40 minutes. They just kept wanting to play it, over and over again. We had a lot of laughter, and that's really what you want. The indication of a women's team doing really well is that there has to be a great element of laughter and a great element of harmony."

Best Athlete Responses to Lack of Playing Time

The following report on handling lack of playing time is addressed directly to athletes.

There is no more emotionally charged issue than this one in sports. At every level and in every sport, athletes continually struggle with the amount of time they spend *watching* the action instead of being *in* the action making it happen.

So how much playing time (PT) are you *really* getting? And, if you're not getting enough, do you think that the situation is fair? Do you think the coach is giving PT to some of your less talented or less deserving teammates who you're convinced should not be playing in front of you?

It's a truly rare athlete that is able to

consistently and effectively handle the heartache, disappointment and frustration that goes along with getting limited playing time. However, if you can't learn to cope with sitting on the bench, if you can't learn to master the negative emotions and disruptive thoughts that are a part of the game, then you'll miss a valuable opportunity to grow and improve both as an athlete and a person.

Ask most athletes whether they think that they're getting enough playing time and the answer will almost always be a resounding, "No Way!" As an athlete, as far as you're concerned there is a grave injustice being done here that you find yourself miserably camped out on the bench collecting splinters while other, in your opinion, "less-worthy" teammates are taking *your* spot and getting all the

limelight. You feel in your guts, you should be out there.

Perhaps the coach is biased. He or she has favorites on the squad and no matter what you do to try to get their attention, he or she will not take his eyes off of a small band of "special" players. However you want to view this situation and the coach's decisions, your predicament doesn't change. You're still stuck on the sidelines.

Let's take an honest and closer look at the situation. One of two things may be going on here. First, you may be right about the coach and his faulty assessment of you, i.e. you should be getting much more playing time because you are better than the athletes he has playing in front of you. Or second, you're way off base, don't

Continued on next page

Athletes and Playing Time, cont.

have a clear perspective of the situation here and you're seriously overrating your skills. In either case however, how you *choose* to handle things will always be the same.

Let's briefly examine scenario number one: The coach isn't playing you and he has no good reason to have you sitting on the bench. The guy or gal may have several favorites that play in front of you. He or she may have a personality conflict with you. It doesn't seem fair. However, fair or not doesn't matter when it comes to some coaches and how they make their PT decisions and not playing sucks.

Despite the fact that you feel totally out of control and have absolutely no choice what-so-ever, (it's the coaches game and, right or wrong, he/she gets to decide), you do ultimately have choices.

First, you can choose to get motivated or de-motivated. You can use the situation as an impetus to work harder and do more or you can use it as an excuse to stop trying and a reason to give up. No question that if the coach is still not playing you even after you bust your butt in practice, even after you go hard and consistently out-play and out-work the starters, even after you follow all the team rules while the starters break them, even after you perform magnificently the minute or two you manage to get in during "garbage time" at the very end of the game, then you have every justification in the world to conclude, "*What's the point?*" and then stop trying.

Or, you can make up your mind that the emotional adversity that you're faced with right now is a wonderful opportunity! Crazy as that may sound, you actually have an opportunity to get more motivated. You can use your frustration to work harder in the weight room, to go harder and faster during sprints, to stay later after practice and take another 100 free throws or 75 three-point shots. You can embrace the challenge of limited playing time by re-dedicating yourself to getting faster, stronger and better. In order to do this you must be able to "*keep the bigger picture in mind.*"

The bigger picture is you and your sport in the long run, NOT just this particular season. Do you have plans to try to make

the varsity, the starting line-up, to get a college scholarship or to just simply play at the next level? If you do, then you do not want to lose sight of this bigger picture. You may not be able to get the playing time this season that you want, but that does not mean that you can't continue to work and progress towards that bigger goal.

Second, you can *choose to maintain a positive attitude in practice and at games or you can put on a cloak of negativity and "share" it with all those around you.* You know the drill when you're really unhappy because you feel like you've been given a raw deal. You can openly show your displeasure on the bench. You can let everyone on the court/field know that you're not a happy camper and choose to act out your feelings of resentment and jealousy by emotionally punishing your teammates that are playing in front of you. You can complain about everything from practice drills to team rules.

Or, you can "make lemonade" out of the "lemons" that you've been handed. You can work to be a beacon of positive attitude. You can keep your head up and continue to support the team, especially the players starting in front of you. You can model appropriate team behavior. You can maintain an open relationship with the coach doing everything in your power to help the team be successful. Being positive is not the easier choice to make in this situation. It is far easier to give in to your negativity, resentment and unhappiness. However, maintaining a positive attitude in the face of adversity, especially the hardship caused by limited to no playing time is the mark of a true champion.

Third, when it comes to choices, you have to seriously consider what you really want out of this season and the remainder of your athletic career. In other words, *do you want to be right or do you want to get better as an athlete?*

You may be getting a raw deal. But even if you are, dwelling on the fact that you're right and the coach is wrong, bad, mean or unfair won't do squat for your athletic career. It won't make you better. It won't get you stronger. It won't improve your conditioning and it certainly won't do anything for your mental toughness. And finally, if you're planning to play for another coach

at another level, being right will not help you adequately prepare for this transition. Simply put, dwelling on how wronged you've been and how right you are will only serve to weaken you as a player and as a person.

So, do you want to be right or do you want to get tougher and better as an athlete? The cold hard facts of your situation are as follows: With this kind of coach, you are in no position to *directly* affect his or her decisions. As far as you're concerned, your PT and the coach are *huge uncontrollable*s.

You do NOT have any DIRECT control over the coach. What you DO have direct control over is how you choose to react to this situation. You have control over whether you keep working hard. You have control over whether you get better or not. You have control over the supportive and positive manner with which you interact with your teammates. Want my advice? *Stay focused on only these things that you can control!*

Speaking of control, there's one other point. When you invest your energy into feeling angry, upset and ripped off by the coach, when you interpret your lack of PT to mean that the coach doesn't "believe" in you, when you stop trying because "what's the use?", when you start questioning why you even bother to play this game that you once loved, then in essence what you are really doing is giving that coach complete control of and power over you. That's a losing strategy.

Remember, just because you think you should be playing doesn't always mean that you should. Often the coach is right on in his assessment that you should be sitting on the bench. Regardless of the reasons for your lack of PT, you can't let the coach or anyone else steal your love for the game, your motivation and your heart. Why would you want to give anyone this kind of power over you?

Remember, the problem isn't your lack of playing time. The problem is most often how you choose to react to the lack of PT!