

Personal values, a forgotten tool for a soccer coach

10 Nov 2010

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In my opinion, one of the more important tools in a coach's repertoire is his or hers personal values. This may sound a little odd, as technical & tactical knowledge is of course of utmost importance in the modern game.

In fact, **coach education** is undoubtedly integral in any coaches development and is the cornerstone of ensuring we have talented coaches to develop players into the future.

Knowledge and coaching skills, however, can be rendered useless without a proper framework of values for them to work within. I have always been a firm believer that the values and beliefs of any good coach are clearly visible via the team's on-field endeavors. A good example from the professional game would be the contrasting but equally impressive values of **Arsene Wenger's** Arsenal or **Jose Mourniho's** Champions League winning Inter Milan side.

My own actions as a coach are in general governed by three beliefs that I wish to portray myself and also to be the common thread amongst every team I coach at all levels.

Below I share these values that I believe in and seek my players and staff to buy into. These values I have found have ultimately contributed significantly to delivering success for me however they may not be the same values that you as a coach would wish to work with.

Work Ethic

I believe that the demands we place on our players and fellow coaching staff need to be honest and realistic. One value I demand, firstly on myself and in turn on my players is that their efforts in everything we do are as close as possible to 100% at all times.

The same demand that applies to players also applies to the coaching staff. Regardless of the job someone does, the same high level of work ethic is required. Only when each individual in each role works as close as possible to the 100% mark on a consistent basis can we collectively and realistically dream of success.

Commitment to Improvement

As a coach and as a team, we are simply in no man's land without knowing where we currently are and where we want to be in the future. Measurement of performance collectively and individually of both

playing and coaching staff is important to me and the follow on from this is the establishment of a genuine commitment to improving on all of our actions.

There are of course many ways to measure performance and you will have particular methods you prefer. It is safe to say though that methods such as video analysis for example now plays a significant role in measuring performance particularly at elite international level and is used as a tool to ensure we can always strive to improve on previous efforts by objectively analyzing our performance.

I have also been extremely lucky in my coaching career thus far to work with many players whose commitment to improving was very noticeable at every training session. The real key is identifying those players in your group who can become ambassadors of the 'commitment to improvement' and drive it from within the team. Never underestimate the impact empowering the players to demand improvement from each other can have on your team.

Innovation/Risk Taking

Functionality can keep you in a game but innovation can change the outcome of it. I place a big emphasis on being innovative with my players and staff and encourage them to take calculated risks that can reap big rewards.

Innovation can lead to inspiration. Conventional logical methods do work but I must admit to loving the occasional 'mad' idea such as trying a player in an untested position, a new formation or a new set piece routine in the hope of striking gold. In this regard, when it comes to fellow Coaches working with me it is vital that these are not people merely interested in saying 'yes' to keep the peace but are confident experienced people who are willing to challenge my views as a coach and to be creative themselves without fear of belittlement.

Final Word

An important point to note with personal values is that they should really be applicable to any situation. It should be immaterial whether the team is a Youth U-9's team or an elite international team. Coaching values I believe should sit easily with both development and competitive coaching styles. There is no right or wrong set of values, merely one's that fit you, your beliefs and hopefully your championship winning team!

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