



Spokane Soccer Academy

A Coach's Guide to Winning at the Motivation Game

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INTRODUCTION

Winners have it, everyone else wants it. Motivation, that critical ingredient to success both in and out of sports. It's the one element that will allow you to get back up after repeated failures and still achieve your goals. Follow these guidelines/strategies to help develop winning motivation on your team.

STEP ONE

MOTIVATION IS ABOUT SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

It is not just up to you to motivate your athletes. They must have some spark of motivation themselves. You can't motivate someone to do something unless they want to also!

STEP TWO

MOTIVATION IS ABOUT HAVING A DIRECTION/GIVING A DIRECTION

Everyone is motivated. The key question is to do what? As a coach you have to help your athletes develop that direction.

STEP THREE

MOTIVATION IS ABOUT SELLING

Good motivators are good sales people. You have to sell your athletes on hard work and the pursuit of excellence. You have to get them to buy that their sacrifices and sweat are worth the price of the goal. This means that you have to explain to them the necessity of their efforts. Simply telling an athlete to do something is nowhere near as effective as explaining to them how this exercise or drill will help them get closer to where they want to go.

STEP FOUR

DO NOT TAKE MOTIVATION FOR GRANTED

Even professional athletes need outside motivation from their coach. Too many coaches wrongly assume that the athlete should already be totally motivated and that this motivation piece is up to the athlete. Big Mistake!

STEP FIVE

MOTIVATION IS AN EVERYDAY JOB, NOT JUST SOMETHING YOU DO BEFORE THE BIG COMPETITIONS

90% of motivation happens in practice from day #1. 5-10% of motivation gets done just before the big game/race/match. Unless you are working everyday at being a motivator, the gimmicks and talks that you pull out on game day will be ineffectual.

STEP SIX

THE HEART OF MOTIVATION IS DEVELOPING A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR ATHLETE

The kind of relationship that you develop with each athlete from the beginning of the season will largely determine how motivated that individual will be to learn from and perform for you.

RELATIONSHIP/MOTIVATION BUILDING GUIDELINES TREAT YOUR ATHLETES WITH RESPECT

Deal with your athletes the way that you would like to be dealt with. Respect them and they will respect you, be able to learn from you and will go to the ends of the earth to perform for you.



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AVOID COMPARISONS

Comparisons almost always make athletes feel badly about themselves, kill their motivation and engender intrasquad rivalry & unhealthy competition. Compare only to model (i.e., "Look at the way Janice executes that trick... especially watch what she does with her upper body").

DEAL WITH YOUR ATHLETE AS A WHOLE PERSON

Take an interest in your athlete beyond his/her athletic abilities. If you care about them as a person rather than just what they can do for the team, they will reward you with high motivation, increased intensity and great performances.

LISTEN/BE EMPATHETIC

The heart of effective communication is listening. The way to make an athlete feel better about themselves is to listen to them when they speak to you and to attempt to understand them from their perspective. Be silent when they talk, don't plan your next comment and try to step into their shoes. Your efforts will pay off in a strong relationship and a motivated athlete.

DO NOT EQUATE YOUR ATHLETES' SELF-WORTH WITH THEIR PERFORMANCES

Bad performances don't mean bad people. Let your athlete know that you are even more there for them when they have a bad performance than when they have a good one. Don't be a fair weather fan to your athletes!

STEP SEVEN

MOTIVATE BY CHALLENGES RATHER THAN THREATS

If you really want an athlete to go to that next level, challenge them. Encourage them to go for it and let them know that you believe they can do it. A challenge is positive and motivational. A threat is negative and gets the athlete preoccupied with the consequences for failing, punishment.

STEP EIGHT

BE POSITIVE

Nothing good comes from negativity. It's a real demotivator. Consistently getting down on your athletes will not make them feel good about themselves or you. Be positive, no matter what, and you'll be a successful motivator.

STEP NINE

USE RECOGNITION

Recognition is one of the most powerful motivators there is. Every day let your athletes know that you know they're there and giving an effort. Even simple comments like, "good job", or "nice hustle" will go a long way to motivating them.

STEP TEN

HANDLE FAILURES AND MISTAKES CONSTRUCTIVELY

Teach your athletes that failures and setbacks are a necessary part of the learning process and not a cause for embarrassment or quitting. Model this attitude and you'll motivate your athletes to take risks and really go for it. If you jump in an athlete's face whenever he messes up you'll demotivate him and get him worrying about failing.

STEP ELEVEN

MODEL MOTIVATION IN ALL OF YOUR INTERACTIONS

If you want to be a motivator you have to be motivated! If you can't get excited about practice and always seem to just "go through the motions" forget about motivation. Motivation starts with you. Display enthusiasm and passion to your athletes and they will start to pick up on it!



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STEP TWELVE

HAVE A BIG ENOUGH "WHY"

Motivation is all about having a big enough "why" or reason for doing something. If you have a big enough why, you can always find the "how" to accomplish it. Help your athletes develop a big enough "why" to train and pursue excellence. Remind them daily of this "why".

STEP THIRTEEN

USE GOAL SETTING THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE SEASON

Clearly defined goals help you take your dreams and turn them into reality. Work with your athletes at the beginning and throughout the season on specific, measurable, clearly defines goals that they can break down into long term, intermediate and short term pieces. help your athletes make sense of every practice in relation to their long term goals.

STEP FOURTEEN

HAVE FUN

Create an atmosphere of fun on your team and you will motivate your athletes to train harder and longer. If practice is nothing but uninterrupted drudgery your athletes will quickly lose interest. If you really want your athletes to be serious competitors and come through in the clutch for you, introduce humor and fun regularly in practice. STEP FIFTEEN REST Rest is part of good training. If an athlete does not get a chance to rest he/she will ultimately burn out, either mentally or physically. Short breaks in training over the course of the season will keep your athletes physically and mentally fresh and insure that they stay