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HOW ARE YOU DOING, COACH?

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HEY COACH, HOW ARE YOU DOING? HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE YOURSELF?

As a coach, you know the importance of evaluating athletes. How do you assess or measure their progress or development? Do you only assess the athletes' win-loss record? Of course not! You know there are many elements that go into producing a successful competitive performance—some more controllable than others, and you most likely evaluate athletes on those elements or components. For example, a track coach may evaluate elements of performance such as strength, speed, reaction time, race management, practice intensity and hurdling technique to get a sense of his/her athletes' progress or development.

Now, it is time to evaluate yourself. You or your boss may want to measure your effectiveness as a coach. Unfortunately, most coaches and administrators assess coaching performance based solely on performance of the athletes. It is assumed that a coach is doing a good job if athletes perform well (win) and not measuring up if athletes perform poorly. That doesn't make sense! You can probably identify coaches with athletes that perform well despite poor coaching, a mismanaged team and inappropriate behavior. Looking only at athlete performance is an easy, convenient way to measure coach effectiveness, but is athlete performance an accurate reflection of all that a coach does? No way!

Coaches do much more than prepare athletes to compete. Coaches take on many roles and responsibilities that directly and indirectly influence the performance and development of athletes; therefore, it makes sense to assess performance based on all coaches do and how they handle responsibilities.

Take a look at some of the primary components of your coaching job. After each component, there are questions to ask yourself to get a sense of how you are doing. Also, evaluate yourself based on other responsibilities that may be unique to your coaching situation. This list of questions, while certainly not a comprehensive list, gives you a place to start your self-evaluation.¹

HANDLE ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Do you accept and successfully complete the administrative tasks assigned to you in a timely manner?
- Do you manage budget and personnel effectively?
- Are you organized when managing the team and program?
- Do you balance or prioritize various responsibilities?

MANAGE RELATIONSHIPS

- Do you treat athletes equitably and with respect? If you don't know, ask them.
- Do you communicate effectively with assistant coaches, athletes, parents and NGB personnel?
- Do you demonstrate concern for the welfare of individual athletes?

- Are you in touch with and able to manage team morale and environment?
- Do you provide positive feedback to the athletes? Is criticism constructive?

Now is the

time to evaluate

yourself

HAVE A SOLID KNOWLEDGE BASE

- Do you understand and teach basic as well as advanced sport techniques and skills?
- Do you understand and teach basic and advanced sport tactics?
- Do you analyze and correct technique/skill errors?
- Do you understand and integrate sport science training principles into your program (i.e., sport psychology, strength training, physiology and nutrition)?
- Do you plan and run efficient practices?
- Do you have a well-designed developmental plan for the athletes/team? Do you communicate that plan to the athletes/team, parents, NGB staff and other appropriate individuals?

BE A ROLE MODEL

- Do you conduct yourself with honesty, integrity and professionalism?
- Do you coach in accord with USOC Coaching Code of Ethics?²
- Are you a positive representative of your NGB on and off the playing field? In the media?
- How do you manage the pressures and stresses of sport in front of your athletes?

DEVELOP YOUR ATHLETE

- Are the technical and tactical skills of your athletes improving?
- Are individual athletes performing at a more advanced level than the previous season?
- Are athletes consistently performing at a higher level in practice and competition?

PRODUCE

- Have the athletes/team achieved specific goals?
- Have the athletes/team improved the win/loss record? Have they placed at major competitions?

Wow! Coaches definitely have multifaceted jobs of a diverse nature. Because of the importance placed on performance, there is the tendency to equate how coaches are doing by their athletes'/team's accomplishments. However, there are many pieces/components to successful coaching to be addressed and taken into account when assessing your effectiveness.

SO, HOW ARE YOU DOING, COACH?

¹ USOC Coaching is developing a Coach Effectiveness Tool that will be available soon.

² To obtain a single copy of the USOC Coaching Code of Ethics, call the USOC Coaching office at 719/578-4802 or send your name and address requesting a copy to dede.kascak@usoc.org.