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VHSL news

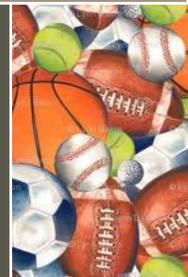
Ask the Experts



A Quarterly Newsletter for Coach Development

VOL 2 ISSUE 3

Coaches Corner



current topics >>>

Focus on the National Coaching Standards

The current issue focuses on the National Coaching Standard in Domain 7—Managing Human Resources

As written in the National Standards for Sport Coaches published by SHAPE America, the coach should use a variety of strategies to evaluate athlete motivation and individual performance as they relate to season goals.

For more information on the National Standards for Coaches go to

<http://www.shapeamerica.org/explorecoaching.cfm>

Managing Human Resources in Coaching

Bob Baker, Ed.D.

The most important element of coaching is people. We interact with many stakeholders on behalf of our program, including administrators, parents, fans, officials, media, and our teaching and coaching peers.

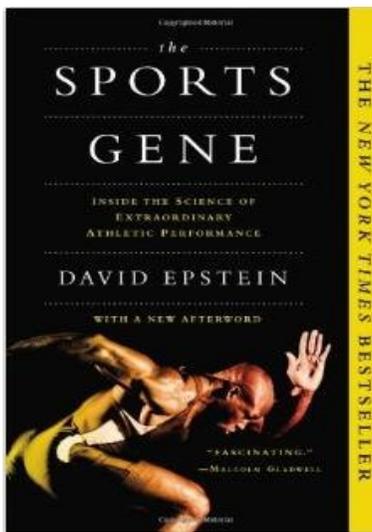
Managing all human resources requires that we first see our stakeholders as valuable resources with the potential to make positive contributions to our sports program. Each of the aforementioned stakeholders is important in our success. For example, without the support of administrators, from Athletics Directors to Central Office, our sports programs would not function. Without parental involvement, we would not have many other resources necessary for success, as they entrust their children to us as coaches. Without the officials, our contests would likely degrade into free-for-alls. We must treat every stakeholder with the civility and dignity that they deserve as human beings in order to be viewed with that same respect. We should set a standard for interaction and expect the same level of civility in return.

An important component of the human resource management process is for managers, like coaches, to recognize their role as leaders. Fundamentally, leadership is “the process of influencing the activity of an individual or group in efforts to achieve a goal in a given situation” (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson, 2008, p. 62). We should build our coaching practices on the ABCs of sport leadership: antecedents, best practices, and consequences.

Antecedents are all of the circumstances and resources, including people, which are in place before coaching leadership begins. These are the elements that impact coaches’ actions, such as level of team talent, and that of the opponent, each team’s preferred style of play, and so forth. Another example

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The Sports Gene: Inside the Science of Extraordinary Athletic Performances by David Epstein

BOOK REVIEW BY CRAIG ESHERICK, J.D.

David Epstein has written a fascinating book that continues the debate about high performance athletes. Is it practice (nurture) that is the primary driver of elite performance or is it inherited talent (nature)? Epstein comes down somewhere in the middle of this philosophical discussion but not without providing an exhaustive amount of research to support his position.

Coaches in every sport endlessly engage in this debate. Sometimes they wonder whether an athlete is dedicated enough to be an elite performer? Coaches will also surmise that maybe athletes doing everything asked of them just can't make that jump to the next level. And the question arises: Are they just not talented enough to get there?

Epstein is uniquely positioned to weigh in on the debate. Epstein himself is an elite athlete and was an All-East NCAA Division I middle distance runner at Columbia University. He also is a talented and engaging writer, who has a knack for explaining sports science to those among us allergic to anything too scientific or technical.

In his book, Epstein explores the athletic accomplishments of some of the most well known athletes of our time. He analyzes the development of Tiger Woods. He details how Kansas born Jim Ryun went from an average runner on his high school JV team into one of the country's best known milers. He discusses the great German tennis star, Steffi Graf, and former LA Dodgers baseball players Mike Piazza and Eric Karros. He weaves in fascinating stories about home run hitters Barry Bonds and Albert Pujols along with an exploration of former Pittsburgh Steelers running back Jerome Bettis and how players deal with pain. He also describes the amazing performances of Jamaicans in world class track competition including Usain Bolt. Epstein's ability to talk clearly and intelligently about such a wide range of sports and their elite performers makes this book especially appealing to coaches.

Complimenting his discussion of many well known athletes is Epstein's impressive review of the research by some of the world's most celebrated sports scientists. K. Anders Ericsson's research into elite

performance and Ericsson's discussion of the notion of 'deliberate practice' and the '10,000 hour rule' become an important starting point for Epstein. Epstein includes a trip to South Africa to talk to Justin DuRandt, manager of the Discovery High Performance Center at the Sport Science Institute. The reader is also presented with the work of Jason Gulbin, a noted physiologist from the Australian Institute for Sport. Readers are introduced to the work of German psychologist Wolfgang Schneider and his studies involving the German Tennis Federation and other junior athletes. Early on, Epstein sets the stage with a discussion of the research conducted by a former point guard for Canada's national basketball team, Janet Starkes, who has done some ground breaking work in analyzing the perception abilities of athletes and how they 'see' the playing field during competition.

For coaches who have read Malcolm Gladwell's book *Outliers*, *Talent is Overrated* by Geoff Colvin or *The Talent Code* by Daniel Coyle this book will act as a counter weight to proponents of practice (nurture) as the sole determinant of elite performance in sports.

ask the experts >>>

Q: Are there other newsletters that provide information for coaches?

A: Yes, the NFHS has Coaching Today online (<http://www.nfhs.org/coachingtoday/>)



Contributors this Month

This month's submissions come from Bob Baker and Craig Esherick, both professors at George Mason University and also former basketball coaches. Bob and Craig are currently working on a book on coaching that will be published in 2016 by Jones and Bartlett.



Continued from page 1 >>>

might be the constraint of time. With three seconds left in a contest, the best player unavailable, and 30 seconds to make a coaching decision, seeking input from others is a less effective leadership style than being decisive. Therefore, good leaders weigh all of the antecedents before considering an action.

Best practices are the actual behaviors employed by a coach. One best practice is to use House's (1971) Path-Goal approach to leadership which suggests clearly defining goals for the team, and each team member. Under this approach, coaches serve as facilitators who reduce roadblocks and show how each player's contributions are critical to the success of the team. This is similar to a transformational (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1982) leadership style in which the coach effectively communicates the vision of the team (i.e., their team goals and supporting individual goals) which can motivate student-athletes to become willing, even eager, to pursue their own and team's goals. If each player achieves her/his individual goals, which are aligned with and supported by the team, then satisfaction and success will result. A third best practice is to focus on development. Coaches can enhance player development by allowing creativity at practice, so they can pursue excellence by finding and pushing their limitations. Self-development is also a great tactic. As John Wooden noted, "it's what we learn after we know it all that counts." Finally, coaches serve as role models, and as such, set the tone for their players' development, work ethic, and character.

Consequences of leadership are seen in the final outcomes and achievements. In sports, the final score, the wins and losses, are often a reflection of success. However, there are other measures that can reveal progress toward desired goals. Are players developing skills? Are teams working together? Are appropriately set goals being met? The bottom line is that two things impact winning and losing: how well your athletes are prepared to perform, and who they are competing against. Leaders seek to maximize each athlete's performance, while simultaneously providing for their individual satisfaction. As a result, team performance is positively maximized. Senge (1990) noted that every system is perfectly designed to yield the results we observe. Clearly defining desired outcomes, for the team and each individual, is a great place to begin.

Through building sound communication habits with all stakeholders and creating an environment that enhances mutual trust and builds team unity as well as using the ABC's of sport leadership, coaches can focus their efforts on what they can control, creating efficiencies in their coaching, and more effectively managing their human resources.

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final thoughts...

This newsletter is brought to you thru collaborative efforts of the VHSL Coaches Education Committee and the Virginia Colleges and Universities that support the positive professional development of scholastic coaches throughout Virginia.

VHSL News

ADVANCED COACHING COURSE OFFERING July 15 & 16 VHSL Office, Charlottesville, VA

This summer the VHSL Coaches Education Committee will be offering the Advanced Course for coaches.

The Advanced Course consists of Human Kinetics' Coaching Principles and Sport First Aid classes plus the VHSL's State and Local Component..

While the Handbook requirement can be met by taking the online version, the Advanced Course is a full two day face-to-face course that will be taught by experienced state instructors. If you appreciate the more in-depth focus on content and interaction with other coaches, this is the course for you.

Course registration information can be found on the VHSL Website under the Coach Education link (<http://www.vhsl.org/doc/upload/coed-advanced-course-registration-July-2015.doc>). Register by June 26th!

Contact us at **434-977-8475** www.vhsl.org



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Virginia High School
League



coming soon >>>

In The Next Issue

Focus on Standard

VHSL News

Book Review

Ask the Experts

2015 National Coaching Conference

The 2015 National Coaching Conference will be held in Morgantown, WV June 10-12, 2015. The theme for the conference is **Physical Literacy: The Launching Pad for Lifetime Athletic Development and Performance**. The program focuses on current research and practice models for optimal integration of athletic development for both participation and peak performance.

Details regarding the program schedule and registration are available at the SHAPE America website: <http://www.shapeamerica.org/events/coachingconf/index.cfm>

