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BASIC PRINCIPLES OF BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL COACH

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the essence of coaching philosophy, its formation, and its significance in athlete development. It reveals the essence of setting a clear goal in a coach's activities, prioritizing an athlete's long-term development over victory, and the principle "The athlete first, victory second." The authoritarian, collaborative, and independent leadership styles of the trainer were also analyzed, and the effectiveness of the collaborative style was emphasized. The article examines the impact of mutual trust, respect, and effective relationships between a coach and an athlete on sports results.

Developing a coaching philosophy. The key to developing a coaching philosophy is knowledge—understanding who you are and knowing what you want to achieve.

Just as it is difficult to travel without knowing your final destination, as a coach, you are unlikely to achieve your goals if your target is not clear to you.

Self-awareness means knowing who you are! Why do you coach or want to coach? What do you value most in coaching? Are you proud to work as a coach? You can ask yourself these and many other questions.

Knowing your goals means knowing what you want to achieve.

If you ask coaches what they want to achieve through their coaching sessions, the answers are usually as follows:

- Victories

- Enjoyment
- Athlete development

All three answers may seem important to you, but which of them is the most important?

The development of an athlete is influenced by the importance attached to victory or defeat.

It is always important to strive for victory. However, "achieving victory at all costs" does not take into account the interests of the athlete's development. This approach is often used by coaches who evaluate themselves in competition based on their athlete's performance.

Many successful and experienced coaches, on the contrary, prioritize the pursuit of the athlete's long-term development. Attention to the athlete's development leads to an optimal sports result rather than the pursuit of victory. As a result, both the athlete and the coach experience greater satisfaction. In this case, the competition is accepted as a method of measuring the level of personal development. Such a philosophy is usually described as follows:

"The athlete is in first place, and victory is in second!" "

This means that:

Athletics is viewed as one aspect of a person's life, but their entire life is not limited to this.

- Respect and recognition are observed for the coach and their work.

Together with the coach, the athletes determine the significance of the athletic result and strive to realize shared expectations.

- Respect for the rules of fair competition and the spirit of competition is formed.

Success is characterized by the athlete achieving their potential.

Respect for opponents, other coaches, and officials is formed.

"The athlete is in first place, and victory is in second!" Philosophy is easy to understand, but hard to apply. As a coach, you must determine for yourself the relative importance of your athlete's development and victories. Then the decision must be carried out not in words, but in deeds. This applies both to the time when things are going well and to the time when they are not.

Coaching Philosophy and Working Style – How to Become a True Leader!

In the past, the role of a coach was often viewed as that of a dominant authority, while the athlete was seen as an obedient student who simply listened and followed instructions. In the modern world of sport, however, athletes have begun to see and understand more, and the word **“why?”** has become part of their vocabulary. This should not be perceived as a challenge to the coach’s position, but rather as a sign of healthy curiosity and a desire to learn on the part of the athlete.

Most coaches, especially former athletes, tend to work in the same way they were coached themselves. Sometimes this can be effective. However, to become a good coach, you need to carefully examine the coaching philosophy and working style that you use. An effective leadership style, based on your coaching philosophy and coaching approach, allows you to communicate with athletes more effectively.

Simply put, we can describe a coach's leadership style through three distinct approaches: **authoritarian, collaborative, and laissez-faire**. The following table compares their characteristics.

Table

Types of Leadership Styles Demonstrated by Coaches

Leadership style			
	Authoritarian	**Collaborative**	**Laissez-faire**
Goals	Sports tasks Social tasks	Social and sports tasks	There are no goals
Decision-making	The coach makes all the decisions	The coach guides, but the solution is reached together	In most cases, the athlete makes all the decisions
Communication style	Instruction	Instruction, please, listening	Listening
Developing communication skills	Almost none	High level	Not available
What is "victory"?	The coach determines it	The athlete and coach determine it	It is not determined
Athlete development	Little trust in the athlete	There is trust in the athlete	Trust is not demonstrated
Motivation	Sometimes encourages	Encourages everyone	There is no motivation
Training structure	Not flexible	Flexible	No

In the art of coaching, authoritarian and laissez-faire styles are extreme approaches and are unlikely to be successful. Working collaboratively involves providing guidance and structure while allowing the athlete to demonstrate their physical, psychological, and social potential. This approach is more consistent with the philosophy of **"Athlete first, winning second!"**

Sometimes, a coach needs to adopt an authoritarian style. This may occur when discipline has been broken or when it is necessary to ensure safety, for example, in throwing events. A good coach adapts their coaching style according to the athlete's personality and the situation. However, in most situations, a collaborative coaching style is recommended.

The Relationship Between the Coach and the Athlete. Is it possible to achieve success in athletics without a coach or without any interaction between a coach and an athlete? Certainly,

some people may think that it is possible. But do athletes really need coaches, and should we consider the importance of the relationship between a coach and an athlete?

Perhaps the first factor to consider is whether an individual athlete needs a coach. Their age, level of preparation in athletics, what they want to achieve, and how they perceive themselves as a person are also important factors. It may also depend on the specific athletics event in which they participate.

Perhaps "independent" athletes are more common in endurance-related events, such as long-distance road running and cross-country running. In these events, athletes may continue training independently after reaching a certain level of preparation.

However, training without a coach is unlikely to be effective in athletics events where sports technique is a priority, such as throwing events, jumping events, sprinting, hurdling, and combined events (multi-events).

In the distant past, there were fewer coaches than there are today, and many athletes trained themselves according to their needs. At the beginning or end of training sessions, they would gather and seek advice from the most successful and experienced athletes in the group.

However, in recent years, particularly since the late 1980s, the International Association of Athletics Federations and individual national federations have actively developed coach education and training systems. As a result, the number of qualified coaches has increased.

Considering that an athlete's development, from learning the fundamentals of athletics to reaching their full potential, can continue from approximately the age of 11 to 30, the relationship between an athlete and a coach may last for 16 years or more. During these 16 or more years of an athlete's sporting career, how many different coaches might they have?

The relationship between a coach and an athlete can be based on one of three models:

1. Escort system – The coach accompanies the athlete from the time they begin participating in athletics until they leave the sport.

2. Partnership system – The coach recognizes that they cannot meet all of the athlete's needs and works with a more experienced coach in order to achieve their common goals.

3. Transfer system – As the athlete progresses to a higher level, the coach transfers them to another coach, or the athlete automatically moves to another coach as part of the education system.

In some countries, there is a system in which athletes automatically move from one coach to another. For example, in the United States, children begin participating in athletics in the lower grades of secondary school, and their coaches train them until they move on to coaches at a higher grade level.

They then move to another coach when they enter the next stage, such as college or university, and later graduate-level education. This is how the coach-athlete relationship system is organized in the United States. Perhaps the natural transfer (or movement) of an athlete from

one coach to another is not an ideal system, but it helps develop flexibility in the approaches of both athletes and coaches.

Nevertheless, there can also be problems associated with the transfer system for coaches and athletes. A coach may be knowledgeable and highly qualified, but if they are unable to establish and develop an appropriate relationship with the athlete, their work cannot be effective. A highly effective coach establishes a strong and appropriate relationship with the athlete that is acceptable and beneficial to both sides.

They need to be properly **"matched"** with each other. This cannot be forced, because it is about satisfying the long-term needs of both the coach and the athlete.

Taking into account an open approach to problem-solving aimed at the development of athletics, sharing coaching experience has been considered a key to success.

All coaches have their own individual coaching systems and approaches. Effective coaches should always be able to recognize when it is necessary to use a transfer system. Each of the escort, partnership, and transfer systems has its own advantages and disadvantages. Identifying the most appropriate system within each model is equally important for both the athlete and the coach when moving from one system to another.

Developing Coaching Skills. The training process can be described in simple terms as a process of planning. It involves organizing what you want to accomplish, carrying out the planned work, and then analyzing what has been done. This **"PLAN–DO–ANALYZE"** process is cyclical and is repeated continuously. It requires skills in planning, implementation, and analysis.

Many coaches stated in the survey that they place particular emphasis on **DOING**. Only the combination of all three components creates the conditions necessary for the growth and development of both the coach and the athlete.

Core Coaching Skills. At the beginning of working with athletes, a coach usually focuses more on developing skills related to **"doing."** As these skills are developed, the coach gains confidence in their work. This book places particular emphasis on acquiring skills related to the **"doing" part of the training process** and describes five core skills that a coach should use as a foundation when working with athletes.

Training Cycle

Five Core Components of Coaching Skills

1. **Establishing and developing relationships**
2. **Instructions and explanations**
3. **Providing demonstrations**
4. **Observation and analysis**
5. **Response and feedback**

Establishing and developing relationships is a fundamental coaching skill. Regardless of the coach's

knowledge, qualifications, or other coaching skills, if they are unable to establish and develop effective relationships with athletes, they cannot become a successful coach.

If you are not yet familiar with the athletes, it is important to smile and maintain eye contact with them. If you want to communicate important information and the sun is shining brightly while you or your athletes are wearing sunglasses, it is advisable to remove your sunglasses before speaking.

Conclusion. Welcome to the world of athletics coaching! It is a wonderful privilege to have the opportunity to guide young people toward participation in sport.

If you have never worked as a coach before, many new discoveries await you. Can you imagine your athletes carrying you off the track on their shoulders after their next victory? Perhaps you dream of your family and friends congratulating you on a successful season? Or maybe your dreams could turn into a nightmare, in which you imagine people laughing at you because of a tactical mistake made during a competition. You lose control of yourself and say things that you later regret. If you have experience in coaching, both of these scenes—the dreams and the nightmares—may already have become reality for you.

As with any profession, coaching has its ups and downs, but if you are prepared for them, there will be more moments of success. If you already possess the pedagogical knowledge and talent required for coaching, basic medical training, administrative and leadership skills, and the wisdom of a psychologist, you can put this book aside—it may not be necessary for you. If you do not possess all of these qualities, then let us learn together how to become a successful coach.

Does a coach's success mean winning competitions? Yes, victory is partly a result of successful coaching. But successful coaching means much more than simply achieving victories. A successful coach teaches athletes new sports skills and abilities, teaches them not only how to gain success from competitions but also how to enjoy the experience and develop self-respect. A successful coach not only understands the technical and tactical aspects of their chosen field but also possesses the ability to communicate this knowledge effectively to young athletes. In addition, a successful coach helps athletes improve their sporting abilities while also equipping them with the life skills and knowledge necessary to find their place in society.

Of course, coaching is about teaching, but it does not end there. A coach not only provides knowledge but also teaches athletes how and where to apply that knowledge effectively. A coach's teaching ability is demonstrated during competitions. This is one of the key ways in which a coach differs from a teacher. Unfortunately, some coaches do not demonstrate enough activity during training sessions but become extremely active during competitions, or vice versa.

The book you are holding will help you avoid this tendency.

Coaching is the ability to take responsibility for and manage your own professional activities. As a coach, you have considerable authority over athletes. You can use this authority to accomplish many positive things, but you can also cause significant harm. Use the authority entrusted to you wisely and do good work that does not harm the athlete as a person.

Coaching is a profession designed to help people. Becoming a successful coach is very difficult. Desire alone is not enough; you need extensive knowledge. Many coaches acquire their coaching skills through numerous trials and errors. However, some mistakes can be very costly! This book will help you reduce the number of mistakes you make and, in some situations, avoid them altogether. Through this book, you will learn about the fundamental principles of professional athletics coaching and how these principles can be applied effectively in practice.

Congratulations! You have taken the first step toward becoming a true professional coach. I encourage you to continue learning throughout your entire career. For a successful coach, the door to new knowledge opens every day.

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