



Communication Techniques Optimize Performance & Facilitate Learning

LEARNING

“No coach ever stops learning. That’s what makes the great coaches great. They strive to learn more every day and they never stop asking questions”.

Jurgen Klopp

“To change and improve is depends on the mentality of the players, and it is my job to convince them.”

Pep Guardiola

Coaches may intentionally coach and communicate in a certain way to facilitate a better learning environment, whereas in other instances a coaches’ unconscious behaviors and communication may create undesirable outcomes regarding listening, learning, and applying technical and tactical instruction. There are a handful of techniques to optimize learning and application for athletes both on the field and in the weight room. Effective communication between coach and athlete is arguably the most important traits with regards to the ‘art of coaching’.

Instructional Communication: Delivery

One fundamental approach within a session is that the session should aim to have more active moments rather than inactive moments. There is a time for instructions and feedback between reps/sets in the weight room which could easily be over a minute or two. However, during a soccer training session it is important for the athletes to learn fundamental skills and experiment through trial and error without constant stoppages of play. I recommend only allotting 30% of the session for pauses of play and instruction/feedback. Keep instruction short and simple, and confirm your message is clearly heard and delivered. Some of the best coaches will constantly talk about “being a Twitter coach” as providing clear, concise, and concrete feedback. Being able to communicate in a clear and brief manner to athletes allows for more active training time, and limit stagnant situations.

Coaching Communication: Allowing Athletes Take Ownership Over Learning

No matter what a coach says, an athlete won’t progress and improve if an athlete isn’t willing to learn and become a better soccer player and/or athlete. Facilitating athletes own their learning is extremely important for their development. In order to encourage athletes to take ownership, coaches should strive for creating buy-in from their athletes about WHY they’re doing what they’re doing. When players understand how the training will help improve their performances on the field, they will be more willing to work with more focus and desire during each and every session whether it’s on the field or in the weight room. Challenging players to critically think and create their own solutions to problems will increase their engagement and facilitate their own learning.



