



LEADERSHIP

Leadership



*The USA Hockey Coaching Education
Program is presented by*



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OBJECTIVES

- To understand the different leadership styles and how they affect the way in which a coach is received by the players
- To understand and be aware of effective leadership qualities and techniques
- To understand what motivates coaches and players to participate in hockey
- To handle problem situations that may arise in your program

LEADERSHIP

Your primary role as a coach is instructing the basic skills of hockey to beginners. This means that you will be a leader, not only of the children but of the other adults or parents who volunteer to help out. It is therefore important for you to have a basic idea of what is expected of you in the leadership role.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

There are three main leadership styles:

1. Autocratic
2. Democratic
3. Laissez-faire

Autocratic — the autocratic leader is one who:

- is the “only authority”
- is a strong disciplinarian
- leads by force
- is usually inflexible
- usually communicates one way

Democratic — the democratic leader is one who:

- seeks input from participants
- usually flexible in approach
- leads using accepted methods
- discipline is enforced once rules have been decided
- listens to reason

Laissez-faire — the laissez-faire leader is one who:

- keeps a very loose rein on participants
- does not normally follow a set pattern
- is very “laid back”
- has little interest in discipline
- seeks leadership help from others

Is there one “best” method or leadership style to be used by a coach? Probably not. Leadership style is largely situational in nature. Sometimes you must be the authority figure; the democratic approach is appropriate at others and when dealing with a mature group, the laissez-faire style may be okay. Each of you most likely has parts of each style that go to make up your own unique leadership style. The important thing is to recognize that there are different styles and which one is effective in what situation.

Your leadership role with the players at the younger levels will be primarily autocratic in nature. This should not be seen as a negative factor. You have superior knowledge, you are the authority figure and you must be in control of the group at all times. In order to maximize learning, minimize opportunities for injuries and accidents to occur and to provide the necessary structure required in the program, this is the leadership style most suited to the head coach position. Of necessity, your approach to assistants and parents will be more democratic in nature, but you must always be in control of the program and its participants.

What leadership style would you say would be appropriate in the following instances:

1. The first ice session of the year?
2. Discussion among fellow coaches about the progressions to be followed in teaching a new skill?
3. A “fun” game at the end of an ice session?
4. Talking to parents about your plans for the year?

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES & TECHNIQUES

Some recommended leadership qualities and techniques associated with being a good coach:

Qualities

- has patience
- communicates well
- allows for individual differences
- provides a good example
- is willing to listen to suggestions
- motivates players

Techniques

- using your influence as a role model effectively
- knowing and being yourself—being aware of your strengths and weaknesses
- attending to individual differences and needs
- encouraging independence, responsibility, exploration and growth
- mastering the art of communication

PARTICIPATION MOTIVES

Coach's Motives

People become involved in hockey instruction for many reasons. These reasons determine how they interact with their players and the type and amount of impact they have on their players.

To have a positive and lasting impact on the players you instruct, it is necessary that your primary reasons for instructing be consistent with meeting the needs of your players. Your reasons for being involved should reflect the optimal physical, psychological and social development of players. To achieve these goals you need to be an effective leader, teacher and organizer; encourage and support players; instruct enthusiastically and express genuine concern for the players' total development and well-being.

As pointed out in the "opening word" above, you significantly affect your players' motivation toward the achievement of their personal goals and the benefits and enjoyment they receive from participating in hockey. Your players' decisions about long-term participation in hockey and sports in general are largely determined by the impact you have on them.

Your reasons for instructing become very important when you consider that the tremendous impact you may have on your players extends well beyond the contact you have with them in hockey.

What are the reasons that you are involved in instructing basic hockey skills?

The three main approaches to coaching/ instructing are:

1. self
2. task
3. social

Self Approach — Sam is a self-oriented coach. Sam is mainly interested in getting recognition for himself and is more concerned with fulfilling his own needs than those of whom he instructs. He instructs for personal praise and glory, and to be looked up to, rather than for the satisfaction of coaching, instructing and helping others grow.

Task Approach — Fred is a task-oriented coach. He is mainly concerned with achieving the goals of the group, whatever they may be. He strives to be effective in teaching skills and to be knowledgeable about the game. Fred focuses on ensuring that each lesson is covered in its entirety.

Social Approach — Arnold is an affiliation oriented or social coach. He is concerned with forming friendships, sharing things with others, providing the security of belonging, and helping develop strong interpersonal relationships. In instructing, Arnold emphasizes having fun and working cooperatively. He's easy to talk to, always friendly and loves to be with the kids.



Player's Motives

The majority of players are there because their parents want them there. However, as they begin to develop skills and knowledge of hockey, they will begin to have their own reasons for participating. These reasons can usually be expressed in the following main categories:

1. excellence
2. affiliation
3. sensation
4. success

Excellence — Players for whom excellence is important want to be very good at playing hockey. They want to master the skills of hockey and be competent in the sport. These players want to:

- improve their hockey skills
- learn new hockey skills
- excel at hockey

Affiliation — Players for whom affiliation is important want to develop and maintain close interpersonal relationships with other players and coaches. They want to be accepted as a member of the group, appreciated by other players and to have fun with other players. These players enjoy:

- making friends
- participating with their friends
- social gatherings

Sensation — Players for whom sensation is important want hockey to provide them with exciting sensory experiences. They want to experience novelty and variety, competition and uncertainties as to what will happen next in ice sessions. They like:

- the excitement of close competition in relays and fun games
- doing new drills
- the feelings of skating smoothly and fast

Success — Players for whom success is important want to receive recognition for the attainment of skills. They want to receive external or extrinsic rewards and be well known. These players like:

- recognition from coaches
- recognition from parents and spectators
- to receive awards or badges for participation

Excellence and affiliation are the two most important reasons for participation by players in hockey although sensation and success are also relatively

important. Although external rewards are an important reason for participation, caution must be exercised by coaches in overemphasizing the use of extrinsic rewards as they may decrease the intrinsic (excellence, sensation) interest of the players for participation. External rewards should be provided as a meaningful reward for the attainment of specific, important goals and not as a continuous natural part of participation. Thus, extrinsic rewards should not be given out too frequently or for unimportant reasons.

It is important for the coach to understand the reasons why players are participating in hockey and provide opportunities for the players to satisfy their reasons for participating. If players are provided with the experiences they are seeking from their hockey participation, then the players will attain improved personal satisfaction from participation and will remain enthusiastic about participating in sport for a long period of time.

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING COMMON SITUATIONS ENCOUNTERED BY COACHES

Research conducted with athletes shows that if they have coaches who follow the guidelines listed below, the athletes generally:

- enjoy playing more
- like their teammates more
- rate their coaches as more knowledgeable
- have a greater desire to continue playing in the future

Look at the guidelines carefully and put a (p) next to the ones you currently use as a part of your instructional style. Put an (o) next to the ones that you need to emphasize more.

1. How to be more positive:

- () Give a lot of positive feedback
- () Have realistic expectations
- () Give positive feedback for desirable behavior as soon as it occurs
- () Praise effort as much as you do results

2. How to react to mistakes:

- Give encouragement immediately after a mistake
- If the player knows how to correct the mistake, encouragement alone is sufficient
- When appropriate, give corrective instruction after a mistake, but always do so in an encouraging and positive way
- Avoid punishment
- Avoid giving corrective instruction in a hostile or punitive way

3. How to maintain in order and discipline:

- Maintain order by establishing clearly what is expected
- Strive to achieve a balance between allowing freedom and maintaining enough structure

4. How to get positive things to happen:

- Set a good example of desired behavior
- Encourage effort, don't demand results all the time
- In giving encouragement, be selective so that it is meaningful
- Avoid giving encouragement in a sarcastic or degrading manner
- Encourage players to be supportive of each other and reward them when they do so.

5. How to create a good learning atmosphere:

- Set realistic goals
- Always give instructions positively
- When giving instructions, be clear and concise
- Show the correct techniques when demonstrating
- Be patient and don't expect or demand more than maximum effort
- Acknowledge and reward effort and progress

6. How to communicate effectively:

- Ask yourself what your actions have communicated
- Encourage two-way communication between coaches and players
- Be sensitive to individual needs
- Communicate at the time when the player is most receptive

7. How to deal with individuals who are disruptive:

- Give them additional responsibilities
- Appeal to their sense of courtesy
- Be positive, not punitive
- Discuss their behavior with their parent(s)

8. How to gain respect:

- Establish your role as a competent and Willing coach
- Be a fair and considerate leader
- Set a good example
- Earn the respect of your players ... don't demand it

AN INSTRUCTIONAL PHILOSOPHY

An instructional philosophy is built on experience, knowledge and abilities you have acquired over the years. This is based on the development of a personal philosophy of leadership style and of the game of hockey itself. To be able to demonstrate and express a sound instructional philosophy, you must be able to:

- be an effective teacher
- be an effective leader for your players
- be a model of cooperation and fair play
- share responsibilities with players, e.g. picking up pucks and putting pylons away
- develop in your players a respect for other participants
- develop self-respect and self-discipline in your players

To have a significant, positive effect on the players you instruct, it is necessary to establish both in your mind and in your behavior a sound, personal instructional philosophy.

SUMMARY

1. Three common leadership styles are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.
2. The main approaches to coaching/instructing are self, task and social.
3. The desire for excellence, affiliation, sensation and success are the main reasons why players participate.
4. One of the keys to becoming a good leader/coach is developing an effective personal philosophy.