COACHING COMPETITORS

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Coaching Competitors in Practice

• Practice competing:
  • Make challenges, create some discomfort
  • Replicate the conditions of competition,
  • Bring audience to some control practices,
  • Talk about it with positive excitement, not as threat!
Teach what to do

• Focus on what is controllable: It is OK to have the goal of winning! But we must translate it into what needs to be done.
• Help the gymnast identify the right focus
• When they do a clean routine, ask about focus. Teach refocusing after a mistake (and reward it when you see it)
COMPETITION READINESS

• Make sure your gymnasts are ready for the competition: If they rarely do clean routines in practice, if they are too fatigued at the end of the routine, if they have been absent or ill.....they may not be ready.

• Evaluate the performance by comparing to what they do “most of the time” in practice.

• Set clear indicators of readiness for competition: # of practices, # of clean routines, physical fitness...
Coaching in Competition

• The closer to the competition, the more the feedback has to be on strengths, things they have done well, what they have (not what is missing!)
• Remind them of clean routines, good elements (Highlights Reel of the Week!)
• Convey Confidence!!!!
Control the Controllables

• **Control**
  – Attitude
  – Behavior
  – Self-Talk
  – Focus

• **No Control**
  – Order of competition
  – Competitors
  – SCORES
  – Judges
COACHING CONFIDENCE

• Show confidence in them. Do you know your body language on the sidelines?
• **Be calm.** Manage your own stress
• Help your gymnasts identify what works for them: Some need to be distracted before they compete or they overthink it!
• Others need to be focused on the routine
THE STRESS OF THE COACH
The Tasks that Coaches do

• Selecting athletes
• Teaching a skill
• Teaching to compete
• Managing Groups
• Administarting
The people they work with

- Gymnasts
- Parents
- Asst. Coaches
- Medical/Training team
- Administration
- Judges
- Others (Media, Competitors....)
Successful Coaches

• Youth coaches passionate about sport
• Positive role models for self-control, discipline, leadership
• From negative coaching experiences they learned what NOT to do

Great Job Coach! Salmela, J., 1996
Early Coaching Career

- Awareness of impact on athletes
- Acquiring Coaching knowledge
- Learning from mistakes

Salmela, J., (96)
Staying on Top

- You never know too much
- Find your style
- Care about overall person
- Effective communication
- Positive working environment
Coaches’ Own Preparation

• For practices
• For competitions (Warm-up, routines…)
• Talking to the team/athlete (knowing when NOT to say anything)
STRESSORS

• Judged on what someone else does
• Many demands with competing goals
• Long hours, travel…
• Family conflict likely
• Low self-care skills
STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR THE COACH

- Self-awareness
- Support
- Balance within the imbalance
Manage your Energy

- Over-stressed or under-recovered?
- Main sources of Energy:
  - Physical
  - Emotional
  - Spiritual
How/when do you recharge?
Self-Awareness

• Your own sources of stress
• Specific responses : The weak link theory
• The power of saying “No”!
• Making your own plan