FORMING A GROUP: More than skills

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CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL TEAMS

• Common Goal
• High commitment
• Complementary Roles
• CLEAR COMMUNICATION
• Constructive Conflict Resolution
• Cohesion
• Solid Leadership
START WITH THE END IN SIGHT

• You need to end up with a group of girls who like and trust each other.
• Not necessarily best friends, but positive towards the goals and the members of the group.
• Need to learn to GIVE AND RECEIVE Feedback
• Attention to the individual but group needs override individual’s.
• Fairness, not equality
• Talent alone does not guarantee a spot
WHAT CAN YOU DO? Or Who should get on the bus?

• Start with a larger group, of course!
• Watch their interactions, not only the skills
• Rule out (for now or for group) “mean” girls, girls who always blame the others for their mistakes, girls who have a lot of trouble with change (lack emotional and interpersonal flexibility)
• Train communication skills from the beginning (showing that you value them)
• Call them on non-verbal communication (eye rolling…)

Coaching Communication

• At every practice pick some moments (good and bad) to ask: What did the other gymnast do well? What would be more helpful if done differently?

• What did she herself do well, what does she need to do better.

• REWARD taking responsibility and giving clear feedback.

• Make sure everyone is asked to do both at some point during the practice (or every other day). Keep track of it.
GROUND RULES

• Ok to criticize the behavior, not the person
• Group has to be a safe place where people may disagree but not disrespect each other
• Social Media postings: What will it be?
• “I” statements, not “She” or “They”.
• Emphasis on the Solution
Receiving Feedback

Clean
- Listen
- Ask Questions
- Internalise
- See as an opportunity to learn

Dirty
- Don’t listen
- Criticize
- Deflect / blame
- Make excuses
- Learn nothing
Giving Feedback

Clean
• Specific
• Focus on behaviors
• Descriptive
• Owned – first hand
• Benefit of receiver

Dirty
• General
• Focus on motive
• Prescriptive
• Disowned
• Benefit of giver
TOOLS

• More – Less – Same
• Good-Better-How
• Hand signal “Thumbs up- Flat – Thumbs down”
• Give opportunities for social interaction : Assign tasks in pairs so that everyone at some point has to do something with everyone else.
• Watch out for closed pairs (very close friends who do not let anyone else in).
• Support fun, social activities where everyone participates.
• Rotate room assignments (that may change as you get a mature group)
CONFLICT

• Is going to be part of the process.

• Do not pretend is not there: Label it and teach conflict resolution skills
CONFLICT RESOLUTION

• Avoidance
• Competition
• Accommodation
• Collaboration
• Compromise
Effective Strategies

• Involve
• Resolve (Focus on the solution rather than the cause)

• Absolve (Put it behind us)
• Learn and Evolve
Be a great communicator yourself!

“If the athletes are not ready to listen to you and, unless you are ready to listen to them and understand them as people, not even the best coaching book in the world will do you any good.”