

Communication the Old Fashion Way

Communication among teammates, coaches and even parents can be really good but sometimes really bad. Communication is extremely important to the success of a team and is well worth working to make sure the lines of communications are open and understood.

Preseason talks with the parents about team rules, team goals and even an explanation of your coaching philosophy and way of coaching is really important. The old “because I said so” doesn’t work very well for team unity.

A meeting with each player and their parents is really a great time for the coach to set the ground rules that the organization and team will be built from and known by throughout time.

Integrity, pride, fairness, hard work, mental toughness, teaching every aspect of the game, togetherness are words to be used often so there is no misunderstanding where the stands on how the team is going to be.

In this age of emails, Facebook, text messages and others, it is so hard to really know what people are saying. With social media, there is an area where you think, what do they really mean by that statement? Are they being sarcastic, are they mad? If there are problems or misunderstandings on a team, it is always better to settle them face to face. No war of words between teammates, coaches or parents over social media should ever be allowed. Stop it immediately and talk it out face to face.

Also, if anyone sends an anonymous note complaining about someone, throw it away. Wondering about it when no one owns up to the note, takes minutes away from your own goals of productivity with the team. There is only so much time to achieve the goals of the team and there is no time for insinuations.

Another corrosive form of communication is called triangulation. When A has a problem with B and doesn’t want to talk directly to B, she goes to C with the problem. She tells her tale and A then asks C not to tell B. That creates tension between A and B which B can probably feel. And now C is in the mess.

Communicate with your players that doing that type of thing only creates problems on the teams and to talk directly to the person.

Unfortunately, at the parent meeting you may have to also remind them that if any parent has a question to let you know and you will explain it to them. Parents can be a bigger problem than the players as we all know.

When I was coaching at my college, I would invite the parents to come to a clinic or a practice once in a while especially at the beginning of the practice season. I would stand with them and explain what we were doing and exactly why we were doing some skills the way we would do them.

I would especially explain to the fathers that a woman has more strength in their lower body and less strength in their upper body than a man. There are some skills we have to do a little differently to be successful.

I answered any question that they might have had and explained everything. We never had problems with the parents. They felt involved and understood my philosophy and were satisfied. The unknown leads to a lot of questions when something happens during a game. Handle it before the games even start to just eliminate the unknown right away. Face to face is always a better way to handle problems