



Episode 148

The Art of Coaching with Questions

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Episode Notes

- **What it means to lead with questions:**
 - Use questions to engage with people
 - You don't always have to be the person with the answer
 - Look for the responses of others to shape your team
 - Relationships are built through questioning and listening
- **Why you should coach with questions:**
 - Research supports helping players discover their own solutions
 - They retain the learning better
 - It sets players up to solve problems without the coach
- **Reservations most coaches have about using questions in practice:**
 - It feels like it takes more time
 - Coaches have been conditioned to just give players the answer
 - On the front end, it feels like it takes too long, but on the back end, they will be able to solve problems without you and be MORE efficient.



- They don't know the right questions to ask
 - Questioning is hard, it's an art form that takes practice!
 - We try to approach it as a science, but it's not!
 - It takes time to learn how to ask higher order questions
 - Ex: Player takes a bad shot and comes out of the game
 - Lower order question: "Was that a good shot?"
 - Higher order question: "How could we get a better shot next time?"
 - Avoid using higher questions to make athletes feel bad
 - Coaches need to consider what player is in front of them and what the learning outcome you are trying to get them to
 - "What does this player need in this moment?"
- **Common problems coaches encounter when they use questions:**
 - The over-enthusiastic player or group that answers without thought
 - It prevents a lot of other players from contributing
 - Try this: "Think about this question, but don't respond...," then ask the question.
 - Call on a player at random after they have had time to think
 - Try this: "Take 15 seconds and talk to your team/partner about _____"
 - They don't use predictive questions
 - Try this: "What are mistakes we need to avoid when _____ happens?"
 - Allows you to remind them of these things as success criteria for a particular segment
 - Try this: "What does success look like in practice today?" after their responses ask, "What things might prevent you/us from being successful in practice today?"
 - "Who do we want to be when _____ happens?"



- **More benefits of asking questions:**
 - Questions allow you to gather information about your team or players that you might not otherwise know
 - Ex: Ask your captain, “how is the team feeling today?”
 - Adjust practice accordingly based on their answer
 - Creates greater clarity for your players
 - Give players instructions, then check for understanding by asking...
 - “Do you understand what I mean when I say _____?”
 - “What questions do you have?”
- **Typical push back from athletes:**
 - Players give the answer they think the coach wants to hear
 - Most players have never had input, so it can be uncomfortable
 - Players get annoyed or defensive
 - They’re used to coaches just giving them the answers
 - The solution:
 - Take time to explain WHY you are using questions
 - Help them learn better and faster
 - Gather information that you as the coach doesn’t know
 - Make sure they know you value their input
- **Application:**
 - Ask these questions in practice:
 - “What worked during that drill?”
 - “What didn’t work during that drill?”
 - Establish success criteria for a practice or drill, then when you ask questions they can be focused on the criteria you already gave them!
 - It narrows players focus for when you ask them a question
 - It helps them scan/watch for the correct things