

MOTIVATE YOUR ATHLETES!

By Dr. Greg Shepard
Part I in a Series
In Conjunction with Part VI;
Setting Your Goals

All coaches would like to improve their abilities to motivate. Most coaches would agree that motivation is a key ingredient to success and one of the very most important factors in successful coaching. Motivation is probably more critical at the high school level as compared with the college or pro levels. Techniques of motivation vary between sports and between age levels. Motivation of people, athletes and teams is as complex as the individuals themselves. Motivation is generally something that is not taught in college but rather an important ability learned through experience. I would like to share my knowledge on motivation through a series of articles beginning with this November 1984 issue. Motivation is also a major part of Goal V in the BFS plan of setting goals. Five previous articles have been written on "Setting Your Goals" so this series of articles on motivation will be an extension of Goal V.

Motivation can be defined as moving people to effort or action. Motivation has been divided into two main categories: Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic means not inherent in, or essential to, a person's nature or more simply put; coming from outside. A parent may say to his child "If you make your bed every day this week, I'll take you to a movie." The child may thus be motivated to action by an outside influence. Intrinsic means belonging or basic to a person by its very nature or coming from the inner self. A parent may say to his child "I love you very very much and the way you help around the house makes you very special to me." The child may thus be motivated to action by an inner desire.

I believe both methods of motivation are necessary for a coach. Extrinsic motivation is much easier to master but is more mechanical and thus not as potentially powerful as the intrinsic method. In the above example, the child may only make his bed for a week with the extrinsic method but may be motivated to have a neat room for a lifetime with the intrinsic method. Many times both extrinsic and intrinsic methods will be blended together and are difficult to tell apart. It is also true that extrinsic motivation can prove to be a catalyst which provides powerful intrinsic motivation. For example, a coach may reward achievement with a school shirt that says "1000 pound Club." This is clearly extrinsic motivation. However, there is also a possibility the athlete will be so filled with pride and enthusiasm that he will want to fulfill his athletic potential with great intensity for his entire career. That same athlete has now been intrinsically motivated because something happened inside.

I would like to tell the following story which illustrates intrinsic motivation with many of its subtleties: Coach Williams, a new football coach, had worked his team hard in the off-season. The players had become noticeably bigger, faster and stronger. They had worked hard on their techniques and their plays. Enthusiasm was at an all-time high. The players had received recognition for achievement with shirts, media coverage, names on charts and advancement to the 1000 pound Club for their hard work in the off-season. Many new players were on the roster for the first time. This was to be

the year for the long-awaited championship.

As the season began, Coach Williams noticed that many players would swear and curse during practice. He called his players over and stated, "Men, I've heard a lot of swearing out here. That's just not like you. You men have worked hard and I believe you are a special group. I also believe we can control our speech and we should for two reasons. First, it just plain isn't right, and second, we don't want any 15 yard penalties or get someone thrown out of the game. Men, we have come just too far to blow a game on something stupid. I've decided, if you forget during practice, it will cost you and me four laps."

During the course of practice in the next few days some of the players forgot. After practice Coach Williams could be seen running with a player around the track four times. Coach Williams would talk about anything but swearing. "How's things at home? I sure like the way you hit out there today. You're making fine progress. Do you understand all your assignments. School going OK?" The players soon learned to control their speech.

**"Accomplishing Goals
Isn't a Matter of
Words; It is a Course
of Action!"**

Dr. Greg Shepard

After three games, the team was undefeated. The school was going crazy with excitement. However, heads were getting big. Some of the players including the captain came late for practice and most of the players were screwing around. Even when Coach Williams and his staff came onto the field this kind of behavior persisted. Coach Williams became furious. "You dumb ———! What the ——— do you think you are doing?" Shouted the enraged coach. The players stood wide-eyed as they were in shock. Coach Williams continued, "You men have let yourselves down. We must increase our intensity; not let up. They are going to come after us with everything this week and we must be at our best. Men, today thus far we have not been at our best but we can still have a super practice. I apologize for swearing. I'll take my four laps after practice."

The practice proceeded with great intensity and it turned out to be the best practice of the year. As the players huddled around Coach Williams after practice, he remarked, "Men you responded like champions. I believe we can win it all and I wouldn't trade you for anything. I'm proud of you. Go on in."

The players started to go in. It had been their toughest practice. Then they saw Coach Williams running around the track by himself. One by one each player decided to join Coach Williams until the whole team and staff was running the four laps. Coach Williams choked with emotion and with tears in his eyes said, "You are truly champions one and all." Then the team began singing the school fight song during their laps. "But you sure can't sing" laughed Coach Williams with a smile as they went together into the locker room.

On page 61, "Ten Traits of a Great Motivator" are presented. You will find many of these traits present in Coach Williams. In our next January's issue, the subject of motivation will be continued.

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TEN TRAITS OF A GREAT MOTIVATOR

- I. Possesses Expert Knowledge in His Field.
- II. Possesses Great Leadership Qualities Through and By Example.
- III. Possesses Great Teaching and Listening Abilities.
- IV. Remains Positive in Times of Adversity.
- V. Understands the Specialness and Uniqueness of the People, of the School and Community in His Environment.
- VI. Possesses the Ability to Admit and Learn from Mistakes.
- VII. Possesses that Unique Sixth Sense on When to Change Course.
- VIII. A Great Motivator can be Humorous, Serious, Emotional and Spiritual and has the Ability to Impart These Moods on Others with a Deep Sense of Purpose.
- IX. Possesses Great Sincerity, Belief and Faith in His Efforts.
- X. Possesses the Special Gift of Communication Which Allows Spirit to Touch Spirit.

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