

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Your ability to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement.

WHAT WILL YOUR COACHING CHALLENGE BE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS?

LOW

Athletes at low levels will:

- Always feel that they must win arguments no matter what.
- Have a difficult time listening to others and will often interrupt during conversations.
- Hold grudges and can't forgive people.
- Only see issues from their perspective.

HIGH

Athletes at high levels will:

- Understand that the goal of arguments is not to win, but to solve the problem.
- Be great at listening to others before responding.
- Forgive others and move on for the good of all.
- Are able to consider and appreciate different perspectives.

HOW CAN YOU MOVE YOUR ATHLETES TO HIGH LEVELS?

Coaching Tips

- **Educate the Team Early & Often:**
 - ✓ Let your team know that conflicts are unavoidable in life but keeping them from being negative is avoidable.
 - ✓ Acknowledge possible areas of conflict to help athletes recognize tensions before they get out of hand.
 - ✓ Offer examples of the keys to resolving conflict: listen, find areas of agreement first, let things go, & use humor.
- **Encourage Communication with a Double Dose of Listening:**
 - ✓ Most conflicts stem from miscommunications or misunderstandings, especially when people are stressed. Help athletes step back and look at the situation more objectively.
 - ✓ Encourage athletes to pause, listen, pause, restate what the other person said to ensure understanding, and then offer their thoughts. They need to listen twice as much as they talk in conflicts.
- **Provide a Common Goal & Areas of Agreement:**
 - ✓ Conflict is not about winning. Have your athletes focus on the areas where they agree first. This may make their disagreements seem less important.
 - ✓ Refocus athletes on the team goals and how each person plays a critical role. Focus on positive examples.
- **Create a Positive Culture:**
 - ✓ Be a role model for being calm and solution-oriented. Don't take sides and let the athletes try to positively work it out first. Intervene if tensions escalate.
 - ✓ Establish team values of trust, respect, and open communication. Then reinforce athletes by recognizing when they successfully display the values.
 - ✓ Use humor to help people let go of issues. Laughter is often the best medicine.

Talking Points

- Discuss how conflicts are a natural part of life. Then, as a team, create "go-to" solutions to use if conflicts arise, such as: focusing the problem & not the person, using humor, not gossiping, or focusing on shared goals.
- Share examples of famous athletes who had conflicts and the negative impact on their teams.
- Discuss how different people have different reactions to conflict, but everyone needs to handle it positively.
- Have everyone share their "triggers" or "hot buttons" are so that the team is aware of what might spark a conflict.

Tools

- APP Lessons: Resolving Conflict
- CORE Elements: Team Player, Coachable
- PRESSURE Elements: Short Fuse, Skeptical, Stubborn, Perfectionistic, Attention Seeker

"Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude." – William James, American Philosopher and Psychologist –