



# TRUST BETWEEN ATHLETES AND COACHES

dr. Maja Smrdu, sport psychologist

- Rules without relationships lead to revolt.
- They won't care what you know until they know you care.

# What is trust

- is an individual's belief that another individual or group of individuals will perform a particular action (enough probability, prediction)
- the belief that that action is consistent with one's goals and objectives.
  - ➔ we choose to cooperate with him/her/them.
- Trust is a function of risk and responsibility. If we believe that someone is responsible enough, we are willing to take a risk on them doing what we expect.
- The greater the responsibility that the person demonstrates or the greater our belief in their responsibility, the greater the risk we are willing to take.

# Why trust?

- enhances a coach's ability to develop their athletes and to reach their full potential.
- A lack of trust can disrupt the athlete's focus, decrease performance, and contribute to the loss of a athlete's confidence in the coach/team.
- Once trust is established, athletes usually listen more closely (commitment to coach), follow instructions more readily (willingness to cooperate) , and generally enjoy the entire team experience more intently.
- Less injuries - inappropriate program of work as put together by the coach and the professional team.
- leads to strong team cohesion
- More energy from coach, self-esteem

# 4 levels of trust

## 1. **Athlete's trust in the coach.**

- The athletes must be able to trust in the coach's ability to develop them as athletes and individuals. The world of athletic competition often places huge physical and psychological demands on players. They have doubts in their abilities and may face grueling physical competition. Players therefore need to 'trust' that their coach will be there to offer them the technical/physical guidance to succeed and the psychosocial support if they do not.

## 2. **Coach's trust in the athlete.**

- The coach needs to be able to trust that the athletes will listen to the instructions given to them. Often, coaches are held accountable for the performance of their athletes. It makes sense therefore that coaches need to 'trust' that athletes are implementing the strategies and techniques that they have developed and practiced and giving max. of their effort.

### **3. Athlete's trust in one another.**

- Athletes need to trust one another to work together as a team and trust each other's abilities during competition. Often athletes have different roles and responsibilities and therefore every athlete needs to 'trust' that everyone else will do what they need to do when they need to do it.

### **4. Athlete's trust/belief in him/herself.**

- Athletes need to have a belief in their ability to execute the technical and tactical aspects of the game necessary for success. This is sometimes known as self-confidence or self-efficacy. Athletes who have low efficacy or confidence do not perform as well as those who 'trust' in their abilities.

# Coach's role in building trust

- Coaches play an integral part in building trust on their team at all four levels. The coach has the responsibility to build trust within his team by shaping the team's culture.
- A team's culture consists of the beliefs and behaviors of the athletes and coaches, professional team and communication between all those on the team.
- the coach needs to clearly display a leadership style that is consistent with the holistic development of the athletes.
- A coach's leadership therefore must target both the physical aspects of sport as well as the psychological factors of the individual athlete. The coach must have extensive knowledge of the sport, substantial experience in the sport, and have the ability to give effective feedback to the athlete.

- Athletes are able to trust that their coach can develop their physical skills and help them reach their potential when the coach has expertise in techniques, tactics, and strategies of the sport.
- Coaches also need to make the psychological development of their athlete's a priority. Athletes should feel that they are valued as both an athlete as well as an individual. They should feel confident that the coach values them as a person and not just by their performance in sport.



# How to build trust

## **Establish a Vision**

- A clear vision for the athlete's future - common goals.
- When coaches create measurable goals for the athletes, they can understand what is expected of them.
- But it also provides a basis against for athlete's assessment the actions of the coach, (themselves and others). Trust is built when individuals display behavior, which is consistent or aligned with this vision and agreed goals.

## **Define clear roles and responsibilities**

- A coach that has defined roles and responsibilities for his athletes creates accountability. By doing this, the coach is accountable to the athletes and simultaneously makes team members accountable to each other. This accountability facilitates the building of trust since there is a clear understanding of the role each member on the team should fulfill. When everyone has clear roles and responsibilities and everyone lives up to them, then trust can be built.

## **Reward & sanction**

- Many coaches want to be friendly with their athletes. While this is good to build camaraderie, coaches should ensure that they have in place a system that equitably rewards athletes when they perform and sanctions and corrects those who do not live up to expectations. One of the biggest obstacles to trust is a coach who does not treat athletes equitably or athletes who think the coach is a pushover.
- Perceptions of a coach's justice, benevolence, integrity, and competence had a significant effect on athletes' trust

## **Build confidence**

- Confidence in one's self, in others on the team, and in the team as a whole can facilitate trust. Athletes need to have confidence that the coach will develop their skills, while the coach needs to have confidence in their athlete's abilities. Confidence can be facilitated through the coach through a culture that involves supported and trusted interpersonal relationships between the athletes, teammates, and coaches. Team building and communication activities that focus on trust, understanding, and a collective team identity are tools in which coaches can instill confidence in their athletes.

## **Communicate openly**

- Athletes should understand what is expected of them and when it is expected. Coaches should be honest, direct, and open when they communicate with their athletes. They should also be able to listen and involve their athletes in decisions. Simultaneously, they need to be able to give accurate and timely feedback to them. Additionally, coaches should create open channels of communication that encourage athletes to have more input. Athletes need to feel that they can express themselves, ask questions and clarify expectations or instructions.
- Trust that your directions will make them better—not just that you'll do what you *think* is best for them.

- A great majority of the problems are due to a lack of communication. The lack of communication likely resulted in a lack of understanding. And the lack of understanding undoubtedly prevented the development of a personal relationship between coach and the athlete. And without a personal relationship, it was impossible for either side to understand how the other interpreted the rules, and this may led to revolt.

- *If you step into the room on day one and say, "I'm Coach so-and-so. I have three degrees and nine certifications. Here are the rules, follow them or else,"*
- It's coaches' job to show athletes how a positive relationship with their coach will benefit them. What benefit do they really understand?
- The head coach of each sport is responsible for the team culture and rules.

# Skills coaches can develop that can help them form strong ties with their athletes

## 1. **Communication**

- Coaches must consider every situation and every athlete individually to decide the best form of communication. Although a democratic style of coaching is usually the best strategy, an autocratic style can also have its advantages.

## 2. **Positive Reinforcement**

- positive support and encouragement
- Coaches don't need to be positive about every aspect to accomplish their goals. They can acknowledge where their athletes are doing well, along with showing them where they need improvement. It's important to note that positive reinforcement hinges on effective communication.
- coach's responsibilities is to help their athletes grow as athletes, as well as help them gain confidence in their skills both on and off the field.
- athletes find their own inner motivation and continue to improve individually

### 3. **Genuine Interest**

- For a coach to gain the respect of their athletes, they must give respect in return. To create a strong relationship, coaches must show an interest that goes beyond immediate sport-related issues.
- the difference between demonstrating interest and genuine interest is sincerity. A coach with genuine interest will gather information about athletes that may help with game strategy, practice, and general bonding.
- Understanding whole life of your athletes

### ◦ 4. **Availability**

- that he or she is available to talk whenever needed
- Younger athletes often need advice and at times, maybe seeking someone to follow (role -model). By being available and engaged, coaches have an opportunity to positively influence their athletes.

## **Technology and Data**

- Objective means

## **Never Stop Learning**



Q&A

# Steps

- 1. build relationship
- 2. build trust