Coach’s Effectiveness And Communication Skills

Effectiveness

Coaching is a process that aims to develop an individual or an athlete’s performance, as well achieving their personal or professional goals. As has been said somewhere, “Coaching is unlocking people’s potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them,” (Whitmore, 2017, p). The knowledge learnt, and the information gained from the effects of the training drills designed by the coach helps improve an athlete’s performance (Gurney & Rezania, 2014). In addition, a coach effectiveness and achievement are determined by the quality of the coach-athlete relationship (Jowett, 2017). As a matter of fact, a coach behaviour, communication, involvement and commitment can lead to a promising impact on an athlete’s development, along with cultivating a positive mindset and motivation (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). However, an athlete may experience negative outcome if their performance does not improve eventually as they are unable to manage the coach training and demands (Ursin & Eriksen, 2004).

Communication

Communication is an action of transferring an information from one place to another, verbally or non-verbally. Effective and efficient communication is a process whereby athletes learnt new skills by obtaining, transferring, processing and applying knowledge and information from the coach personal experience, as well as receiving distinct feedbacks to improve their performances (Kuan, Chin & Savadelavar, 2017). Therefore, the coach knowledge and understanding of the sport is vital (Côté & Gilbert, 2009). Likewise, successful coaching requires good communication to influence an athlete attitude and motivation (Margaret, Kirubakar & Kumutha, 2010). On the other hand, listening is also an important factor to effective communication. Listening to an athlete feedback, questions or body language is necessary as it may inspire the athlete intrinsic motivation (Moen, 2012). Furthermore, communication is interrelated to learning a new skill in sports (Attle & Baker, 2007). However, an athlete’s development may be hindered because of a miscommunication between a coach and an athlete due to the inexperience of coaches or the coach-athlete ratio is imbalanced (Hanstad, Kristiansen, Roberts & Tomten, 2012).

Evidence of Coaching Practise

First Kick Academy (FKA) is a football school that trains children from the age of 4 to 14 years old. FKA only has one football centre located at the East of Singapore, which is situated at Tampines SAFRA. The training is conducted every Saturday, from 9am to 11am. Coach Hakim is one of the coaches working at FKA and has been coaching there for almost 2 years. He also holds the FAS ‘C’ certificate. He is currently coaching the Under-12 kids.

[bookmark: _Hlk4493738]The training was divided into 3 portions; warm-up, technical and technique drills and lastly, small sided match. The periods for each portion were divided into 15 minutes, 75 minutes and 30 minutes respectively.

First, warm-up drills involved individual ball-control juggling, followed by executing dribbling skills movements. Athletes had to juggle the ball with their feet, for at least 10 times successfully, without the ball touching the ground, followed by practising dribbling skill movements such as the double scissors, Zidane roulette, Cruyff turn, feint and drag towards a cone, which represents a defender. These specific warm-up drills prepare the temperature of the athlete's body muscle for the training that is going to transpire later on (Shellock, 2016). Second, athletes began training their defensive and offensive technical skills. Defensive drill consists of ball shielding, whereas offensive drills involve ball possession and through ball combined with a shooting drill. Technical drills improve an athlete endurance capacities plus physiological elements related to football performance (Thomas, 2009). Lastly, athletes played a small sided match to practise and execute the technical and tactical skills and techniques learnt during training into the game (Holt, Ward & Wallhead, 2007). Furthermore, athletes display a higher level of commitment and enjoyment when playing a small sided match (Clemente, Couceiro, Martins & Mendes, 2012).

Effectiveness

Coaching effectiveness can positively influence an athlete performance, attitude, physical and mental well-being (Kavussanu, Boardley, Jutkiewicz, Vincent & Ring, 2008). Furthermore, an athlete individual success and achievements are determined by the behaviour and qualities of the coach, as well as managing a positive relationship between one another. Before coaching the Under-12 kids, Coach Hakim was coaching the Under-10 kids. Some of the athletes had zero knowledge and experience in playing football, hence the reason they joined this academy is to learn the basic football technique and skills. Qualities of a good coach are character, knowledge and skills (Blumenstein, Bar-Eli, Dreshman, Orbach & Weinstein, 2012). Coach Hakim was able to transfer the information, knowledge and skills to the athletes by designing training practises and drills to develop their ability. As a result, the athlete's performance has progressively improved, thus becoming better footballers. For this reason, coaching effectiveness is successful due to the individual player development of an athlete (Horn, 2008). Under the guidance of Coach Hakim, the athletes progressed into the Under-12 group, together with him. Therefore, athletes continue to participate in training because they enjoy their sport experience more (Smith, Smoll & Cumming, 2007).

Coaches can be an influential figure and a role model to an athlete. They have the opportunity to improve and develop an athlete's behaviour and values. The leadership skills of a coach can guide and inspire an athletes current and future behaviour and decisions (Spears, 2012). Coach Hakim is a role model to the athletes. From arriving to training first, to motivating and assisting the athletes during training and showing respect to their needs, athletes have learnt the values of leadership through Coach Hakim actions. Another example would be during the ball juggling warm-up where the athletes were having difficulty juggling the ball. Consequently, they became uninterested and unmotivated. Straightaway, Coach Hakim gathered everyone around him and carried out freestyle football juggling skills to impress the athletes. The athletes were impressed and motivated to continue practising the juggling skills again. Therefore, the skills and knowledge of the coach has promoted the participation and development of the athletes (Correia & Bertram, 2018). Furthermore, the coach was able to implement coaching strategies to influence the motivation and psychology of the athletes (Gilbert & Trudel, 2001).

Communication

Communication style can be divided into verbally or non-verbally. Verbal communication can be categorised further into command, submissive, practise and cooperative style. The communication style used by Coach Hakim was the practise and cooperative style. Practise cooperative style provides athletes to practise a skill while getting feedback by the coach. It develops the athlete's leadership, intrinsic motivation and vision (Lockwood & Perlman, 2008). During their water break after completing the drill session, Coach Hakim would provide pointers on the mistake made by the athletes. His tone was casual and conversational, and his body language was relaxed. At the same time, the athletes were contributing questions, suggestions and feedbacks to Coach Hakim regarding the training session. This enhanced the athlete's responsibility and decision-making skill (West, 2016).

Pitch and tone are involved in achieving effective communication. Clear, constant and direct instructions and interactions are qualities of a coach communication (Erickson, Côté, Hollenstein & Deakin, 2011). Before athletes practised the drills, Coach Hakim would demonstrate and explain the exercise first. He was self-assured, his tone was confident, and his message was direct and precise. Athletes would either stand around or behind him to get a clearer view of his demonstration. Then, Coach Hakim would clarify and repeat the demonstration again if an athlete still misunderstood the drill. Effective instruction is important because it increases an athlete's confidence, motivation and satisfaction through skill development (West, 2016). However, Coach Hakim was annoyed whenever an athlete repeated the same mistake again. He berated the athletes with his arms crossed and an enraged tone, before explaining the mistakes made by them. Although Coach Hakim displayed some anger, his communication style was not authoritative as he did not used any aggressive tactics in his communication (Kassing & Infante, 1999).

Effectiveness and Communication

Motivation is key to a successful performance (Mclean & Mallett, 2012). Coaches often use different approaches such as giving positive or negative feedbacks or increasing the intensity and demands of the training to boost the athlete motivation levels (Hansen, Gilbert & Hamel, 2003). Coach Hakim constantly motivates his athletes during training. He would challenge the athlete's performance by increasing the difficulty of the drill. For instance, athletes were allowed only one touch of the ball instead of two during the possession exercise. According to a data discovered, athletes face satisfaction with their sport experience and coach communication, as well as motivation to play under the influence of the challenges produced by their coach (Cranmer, Brann & Weber, 2018). In addition, he would pause the training to give praises when an athlete performed the drills properly and accurately and give pointers and remedy their mistakes when they performed it inaccurately. During his debrief session at the end of training, he would give criticism followed by compliments of the athlete's performance. However, each compliment comes with a saying of "but, we can do much better." Hence, the athlete's intrinsic motivation rises as they feel satisfied after receiving praises from their coach (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). At the same time, athletes are also aware of their mistakes and takes responsibility to perform better. Therefore, intrinsic motivation and taking responsibility are influential factors for an athlete progression and development (Withley & Frieze, 1985).

Discussion

Overall, Coach Hakim has developed a successful relationship with his athletes. After coaching

the athletes for nearly two years, their relationship is based on mutual respect, trust and honesty. Simultaneously, the athletes understand his philosophy and are familiar with his coaching style. However, there are certain athletes who just joined the academy and are unfamiliar with his coaching style. Coach Hakim must build a positive relationship with the new athletes from scratch, to create an effective sporting experience for them. As young athletes look up to their coaches for information and knowledge, communication and commitment are essential in developing their potential (Goleman, Boyatzis & Mckee, 2002). Moreover, his guidance on and off the field can influence their attitude beyond the sport setting (Holt & Neely, 2011). On the other hand, lack of commitment from the coach could result in an unsuccessful relationship formed between a coach and an athlete (Isoard-Gautheur, Trouilloud, Gustafsson & Guillet-Descas, 2016). As a result, athlete could not achieve their personal goal, thus leading to lesser participation and enjoyment (Hyun & Jordan, 2019).

Although Coach Hakim managed to motivate his athletes to continue practising the juggling exercise, they still were unable to execute it correctly as it was too challenging for them. Developing a skill needs instructions, feedbacks and encouragement (Gallahue, Ozmun & Goodway, 2011). Therefore, Coach Hakim should have demonstrated the technique step-by-step such that the athletes understand the method to perform the skills perfectly.

Meanwhile, Coach Hakim communication style has motivated the athletes to be. But, Coach Hakim has also expressed his anger and annoyance whenever an athlete repeated the same mistake again. This could lead to aggressive communication if Coach Hakim continues expressing his frustrations. Harsh and negative reaction can impact an athlete motivation and development (Sagar & Jowett, 2012). Consequently, athletes experience less satisfaction with their coach, as well as showing bad sportsmanship (Kassing & Infante, 1999).

Increasing the intensity of training or giving challenges to the athletes are effective strategies for their progression and motivation. Consequently, athletes are determined and inspired to become better players. However, different athletes have different potential and abilities. Hence, not everyone is able to perform the challenges. Coach Hakim should challenge the athletes based on their potential instead. The reason is that the average players may face physical and psychological stress as they are unable to perform the challenges (Saw, Main & Gastin, 2015). Thus, athletes will lose confidence in their ability and dissatisfied with the coach training style.

Conclusion

To summarize, attitude reflects leadership. Effectiveness and communication of a coach can build a successful coach-athlete relationship. Furthermore, it influence the development of an athlete performance, motivation and behaviour, thus, maximising their potential and achieving their goals.