



“Sometimes less is more”

COACHING LEADERSHIP – TOO MUCH TECHNICAL

There is so much system and tactical information available on the web these days that overzealous coaches at all amateur levels may smother their players with constant teaching of systems and tactics and then the constant “do this do that” feedback at practice, in games, at video and chalk talk sessions that the players end up tuning out after a while. The younger the players the more this will happen.

In addition, another important negative result of the above with some players is that they begin to lose confidence in themselves. Why is that these overzealous coaches say:

“I’m just doing my job communicating every bit of helpful information to my players that I know. I work hard analyzing everything and learning best practices, and they get the benefit of all my hockey knowledge”.

The problem is with all you didn’t do this right and that right, some players will begin to really believe they are not very good, so they will play that way, without confidence and enthusiasm, not really loving the sport they are playing. Who could blame them? Too much constant negative technical feedback even though framed constructively. How many people like constant constructive feedback on everything they do? Do you?

These coaches fail to realize that right up to the NHL pro level, a good hockey analyst could find dozens of better plays that could have been made but weren’t in any game. For example there are hundreds of turnovers in any full length hockey game, each one capable of a “better play” comment. Some coaches fail to realize the importance of motivation and inspiration in the success of anyone in sports or life for that matter. Thinking positively and not overanalyzing is very important.

So, coaches pick your spots and most importantly your technical priorities. For example, suppose you are in a game winning 3 – 0 after the first period and the room is alive with enthusiasm and confidence. In the talk before the start of the second you decide to get out the hockey board and give them several technical things to correct for the next period making no comment on what a great start they had in the first and why. You can feel the air go out of the room. Then the team goes out, and you continue every shift commenting from the bench to the ice and on the bench when they come off all kinds of do this and do that to the players. The team doesn’t have the same jump in the second period as in the first period, the other team scores 2 goals and you conclude the players didn’t work hard enough or smart enough in the second because they thought the game was already won.

Then after the second period in the room, your tone of voice gets louder and body language sterner, you compound your error by criticizing their work ethic. Further air goes out of the room. What you say could be partly true but you as a coach did not read the psychology of the



room properly after the first period in the first place and focus on the things they did well and introduce only one or no improvement suggestion. So, you probably contributed to the poorer quality of their play in the second period not even realizing it, and worse some players may have lost a little confidence in you. If you do this all the time they certainly will and you will be on your way to “losing the room”.

Remember, sometimes less is more.