



“Yes, focusing on what we do is hugely important, but ignoring what they do is just dumb”

COACHING LEADERSHIP – UNDERSTAND THE OPPOSITION’S TENDENCIES

It is like the dentist’s drill when I hear a coach talk about what the opposition does and the head coach shuts him down, particularly in front of the team by saying “forget what they do let’s focus on what we do”.

Can’t we do both at the same time if prioritized properly. Of course we can. Every business I know does it. Image running a company without any regard for the competition, their products pricing, systems and tactics. We need to be mindful of the age and skill level of the players on our team, but we need to teach our players a broader approach to competing effectively.

For example, do they run a spread or a stack forecheck or both and when? Is it aggressive, or passive? How do they like to dump the puck in? Cross corner, same side, on the goalie, around the net? Is their goalie a white ice or blue ice goalie? Where is his weakness? Glove low or high? Blocker low or high or both? What’s their favoured PP plays? How do they regroup? What are their favourite ozone face off and entry plays? Who are their best players to watch more closely? Etc? Etc?

Many times it’s time constraints that prevent coaches from learning the details about the competition.

Adapting in game to what the competition does can mean the difference between winning and losing in any sport. Look at basketball and the way the Raptors changed their offence and defence to defeat Golden State in the NBA finals in 2019.

Changes cause confusion for a time in the other team until they adjust to your change. Have the same structures and plays in place game after game gives the opposition the advantage as they watch your game.