

Bill Vasko

Coaching Philosophy

While attending college as an undergraduate, people often asked what I was studying. When I replied that I was studying Physical Education, they often replied, "Oh, so you want to be a teacher?" But when I told them that I wanted to be a coach, they usually responded with a puzzled look. People usually don't go to school just to become a coach. In fact, I thought the same thing myself at one time.

When I was a little kid, I had dreams and aspirations of playing football for Ohio State and then in the NFL. I told all of my friends that someday I would be a "star." But I finally realized in high school that those dreams would never come true. Since my life had always revolved around athletics, I decided that I would become an educator and a coach.

Over the past fourteen years, I have served as a coach and educator at a variety of institutions. I have found the experiences to be both enjoyable and very rewarding. I thoroughly enjoy the competitive and strategic aspects of coaching; however, the bonds that are created and the young lives that you become involved with are the aspects that provide the greatest rewards in coaching. Being a coach, you can help shape and influence the lives and futures of so many young people. Not only are you a coach, but also a teacher, counselor, guide, disciplinarian, and most important of all, a companion in life.

The role of a coach in a young athlete's life is an important one, and should not be taken lightly. The coach should provide a proper example of how one should conduct themselves in our society. I do not believe, however, that it is the coach's responsibility to be the only, or even primary, role model for an athlete. A coach is an ideal person for setting a good example through his or her actions; however an athlete's behavior, beliefs, and attitudes should not be solely dependent upon their coach. There are many people who must play an influential role in an athlete's life, and often times there is too much emphasis placed upon the coach as being the primary role model.

In accordance with the role that the coach plays, a fine line is often walked when attempting to maintain an appropriate coach-athlete relationship. Athlete's often place confidence in their coaches by

revealing significant items in their personal lives. It is important, that while an athlete should be able to confide in their coach in these matters, that the coach maintains a professional relationship with the athlete.

Many people believe that athletics is one of the few areas in today's society that can develop a person's character in a positive manner. Character is a broad term and participation in athletics can develop many aspects of a particular person's character. Some of these include, for example, discipline, respect, teamwork, cooperation, loyalty, faith, and trust. I feel that this is where the real satisfaction in coaching comes from--knowing that you have, to the best of your ability, helped prepare a young person for life after their athletic career. During the present, the X's and the O's may seem so important. But looking back, it is the young people that you worked with that you will cherish the most.

Although coaching is an important part of my life, there are three other priorities that take precedence: spiritual faith, family, and friends. I value these three items over everything else in my life, and feel that they can provide a solid foundation in a person's life. I believe that after a person can honestly give of themselves to these priorities, only then will they begin to reap the true benefits of life. Following these three items in importance are my career and taking care of myself. These two items directly involve myself and can be dealt with only after the aforementioned three priorities are properly taken care of.

Although my goals have changed over time, I have always stayed true to my priorities. As long as faith, family, and friends continue to be the focal point of my life, I will be able to attain all goals that I set for myself. Granted, goals change with time, but focusing on the things that are important in one's life allows the opportunities for turning dreams into realities.

Code of Ethics for the College Coach

Bill Vasko

Introduction

The distinguishing characteristic of a profession is that its members are dedicated to rendering a service to humanity. Personal gain must be of lesser consideration. Those who select coaching must understand that the justification for athletics is that it provides spiritual and physical values for those who participate, and the game belongs, essentially, to the players.

The Code of Ethics has been developed to protect and promote the best interests of athletics and the coaching profession. Its primary purpose is to clarify and distinguish ethical and approved professional practices from those which are detrimental. Its secondary purpose is to emphasize the purpose and value of athletics, and to stress proper functions of coaches in relation to schools, players, and the public.

The welfare of athletics depends upon how the coaches live up to the spirit and letter of ethical conduct and how coaches remain ever mindful of the high trust and confidence placed in them by their players and by the public.

The ultimate success of the principles and standards of this Code depends upon those for whom it has been established, the coaches. Coaches unwilling or unable to comply with the principles of the Code of Ethics have no place in the profession.

Responsibilities to the Players

1. In the relationships with athletes, the coach should always be aware of the tremendous influence he/she wields, for good or bad. Parents entrust their dearest possession to the coach's charge; and, the coach, through his/her own example, must always be sure that the young athletes who have played under him/her are finer and more decent people for having done so. The coach should never place the value of a

win above that of instilling the highest desirable ideals and character traits in his/her athletes. The safety and welfare of the athletes should always be uppermost in his/her mind, and they must never be sacrificed for any personal prestige or selfish glory.

2. In teaching the game, the coach must realize that there are certain rules designed to protect the athlete and provide common standards for determining a winner and loser. Any attempts to circumvent these rules, to take unfair advantage of an opponent, or to teach deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct, have no place in athletics, nor has any coach guilty of such teaching any right to call themselves a coach. The coach should set the example for winning without boasting and losing without bitterness. A coach who conducts themselves according to these principles need have no fear of failure, for in the final analysis, the success of a coach can be measured in terms of the respect he/she has earned from his/her own athletes and from his/her opponents.

3. Prompt and professional medical attention is a responsibility of the coach. The diagnosis and treatment of injuries is a medical problem; a coach should not involve themselves with the diagnosis of any injury. It is important that a solid, independent, and competent medical program of diagnosis and treatment be established and that the coach support such a program in the best interest and well-being of the athletes.

4. Under no circumstances should a coach authorize or tolerate the use of illegal performance-enhancing drugs. All medicines used by the athletes should be under the direction of a physician or other appropriate medical personnel.

5. The coach should know and understand the rules of eligibility and not violate any rules that would jeopardize the institution or athletes under his/her direction.

6. Academics and athletics are a joint effort, each providing benefits to the participants. The coach should encourage the proper time-management skills to his/her athletes that will allow them to achieve success both on the playing field and in the classroom. The coach should support all academic endeavors of the athletes.

Responsibility to the Institution

1. The function of the coach is to educate students through participation in athletics. This primary and basic function must always be upheld.
2. The coach shall conduct themselves so as to maintain the principles, integrity, and dignity of the institution.
3. The coach should not exert pressure on faculty members to give athletes consideration they do not deserve.
4. The coach should maintain a professional and positive relationship with the admissions office. The coach should not exert pressure on the admissions office to admit athletes who are not qualified.
5. The coach should discuss his/her problems with the athletic director and/or faculty chairman in a professional manner and then accept and support the decisions that have been reached.
6. The coach should constantly be alert to see that his/her program is being conducted and promoted properly. The coach should lend his/her experience and training to the governing body of the school's athletic program in the solution of athletic problems. Where differences of opinion arise, and the council overrides the coach's judgment, discretion should be exercised in airing such differences outside the council meeting.
7. It is highly important that the coach privately and publicly support the administration in all policies, rules, and regulations regarding athletics.
8. In the event the coach is contacted about a position with another institution, he/she should notify his/her immediate superior as soon as possible.

Responsibility to the Game and the Rules

1. Each coach should be acquainted thoroughly with the rules of the game. The coach is responsible for having the rules taught to, interpreted for, and executed by the athletes.
2. Both the letter and spirit of the rules must be adhered to by the coaches and their athletes.

3. Coaches who seek to gain any advantage by circumvention, disregard, or unwillingness to learn the rules of the game, are unfit for this profession. The coach is responsible for the adherence of the rules by all parties directly involved with the team. The integrity of the game rests mainly on the shoulders of the coach; there can be no compromise.

4. The coach must remember always that it is not the purpose of athletics to hurt or injure an opponent by legal or illegal methods.

Good sportsmanship

Habit formation is developed on the practice field. Where coaches permit, encourage, or condone performance which is dangerous to an opponent, they are derelict in their responsibility to teach fair play and good sportsmanship. This aspect of coaching must be attacked just as vigorously as the teaching of offense and defense, and to the players it is far more important than all of the technical aspects of the game combined. Any coach who fails to stress this point, or who permits, encourages, or defends the use of unsportsmanlike tactics shall be considered guilty of the most serious breach of coaching ethics.