

Top 20 Effective Motivation Techniques

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Tactic #1

Recognize the Importance of Player Motivation

Every good coach must do two things: they must teach and they must motivate!

Far too few coaches devote the time needed to understand how to motivate. Nor do they spend enough time doing the things necessary to motivate (like getting to know your players and find out what makes them tick).

Hard work and motivation will dramatically improve players' skills, improve rebounding, improve defense, improve execution, accelerate learning, and improve everything a team needs to be successful.



Tactic #2



Do NOT Run at the End of Practice

Most coaches don't realize it, but this may be ruining their practices for your players desire to practice!!

If players know they have to run at the end of practice, they will pace themselves throughout your drills because they know RUNNING is coming.

Instead, you should include running/conditioning as part of your regular drills and practice. This way they go HARD the entire practice and it just becomes a habit.

You want your players to be excited about basketball and feel good about it. That's why it's so important to end on a positive note!

Always start you practices with team/together loosening up and stretching and finish with team/together cooling down and light stretching. Good time for team bonding and coaching philosophy inputs.

Don't use running as a punishment or when a team or individual loses in a drill. When running is used negatively it could have a lasting negative effect toward running as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Tactic #3

Be a Teacher



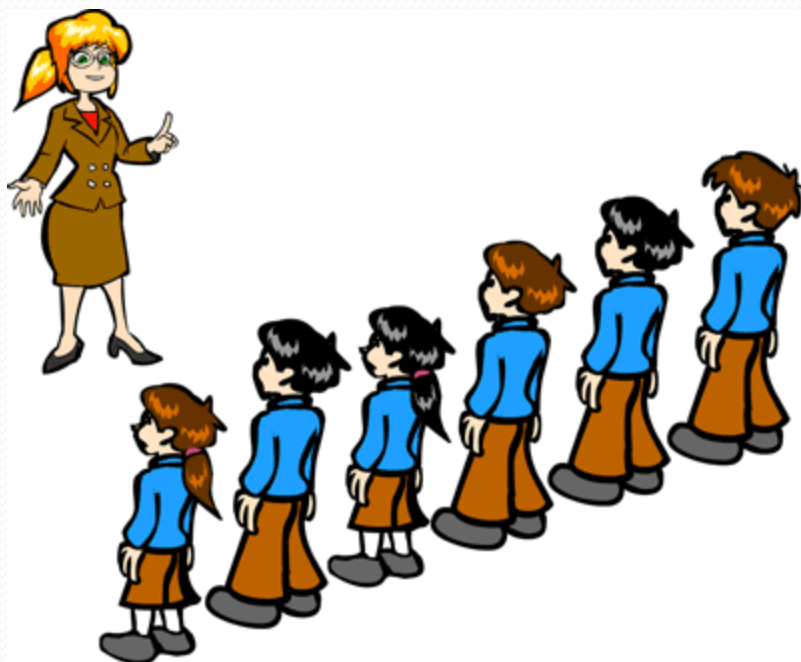
Coaching is teaching. What is the priority and overriding concern of a teacher? It's the progress of the student, not wins and losses

This is a simple and profound concept that you need to embrace. When the coach treats the player as a student, players and the team show tremendous improvement.

Players do in games exactly what they do in practice. Don't fool yourself. A remarkable pre-game speech isn't going to suddenly light a fire that lasts the entire game. This is not the answer.

The best way to motivate your players is: Teach them. Players will respond if you teach them. And when they notice that they have improved, this will yield even more motivation.

The lesson here is simple: Treat your players like students. Teach them. Help them improve. Make sure they see that they are improving. Don't let improvement slow down. Make sure they are always improving and see the results.



John Wooden Food for Thought



This is from the book called [The Talent Code](#). In 1974, two educational psychologists named Ron Gallimore and Roland Tharp studied John Wooden during every one of his practices throughout the season. They recorded each teaching act that Wooden instructed that year.

"There were 2,326 discrete acts of teaching.
Of them, a mere **6.9 percent were compliments.**
Only **6.6 percent were expressions of displeasure.**
But **75 percent were pure information** on what to do,
how to do it, when to intensify an activity.

One of Wooden's most frequent forms of teaching was a 3-part method when he modeled:

- 1.the right way to do something
- 2.showed the incorrect way
and
- 3.then remodeled the right way to do something.

"His actions rarely took longer than 3 seconds."

Tactic #4

Explain the Reason Why

A good teacher (and sales person for that matter) explains the "reason why".

Quite often players don't understand why they are doing a certain drill, and frankly they lose motivation. They don't truly believe the drill is helping them.

This is why you need to explain the "reason why" the fundamentals and drills you run are important. Don't assume the players know, because they probably don't.

Explaining the "reason why" is a proven psychological trigger that causes people to take a desired action. At a psychological level, humans by nature want to know the reason why they are doing something.



Tactic #5

Show Improvement and Growth the Entire Season

Perhaps the best motivation of all is when athletes can see and feel that they are constantly improving. The beginning of the season is always very productive because it's new, fresh, and players feel like they are quickly getting better.

Kids are motivated by progress and by growing; so offering constant feedback on their effort and performance is very important. Especially for the kids that don't play very much.

For players who are often substitutes, keeping them motivated is difficult. For example, try to have a weekly game in which the head coach works solely with the substitutes and an assistant coach works with the first-team but don't at any time put distance between the players.

Each individual should feel that he or she has been successful at some point in the practice.



Tactic #6

Celebrate Small Successes Both Team and Individual

Instead of worrying about winning, put players in a position where they can experience other successes...

Kids want to be successful and have fun. But unfortunately not everyone can win. That's why it's very important for you to find other ways for players to succeed.



Here are just a few ideas:

- Celebrate finishing a tough drill
- Celebrate meeting a goal
- Celebrate out rebounding the opponent
- Celebrate when they learn a new skill
- Celebrate when the team or individual shooting percentages improves
- Celebrate when they learn the offense
- Celebrate when the team or a player breaks a tough habit
- Celebrate when a player demonstrates supreme teamwork
- Celebrate when a player dives after a loose ball



Tactic #7

Reward Hard Work and Offer Positive Reinforcement

Coaches get what they reward. It's simple, really. That's why you should relentlessly reward your desired result (hard work and effort!).

Positive reinforcement is giving a child a reward immediately following a behavior to encourage them to do it again. If a child gets positive reinforcement such as a reward for doing a behavior, they will focus on doing the right thing and repeating that behavior.

When a child does something right or good, it is necessary that you reward them for their action. This could be as simple as a pat on the back or a verbal "well done"

Positive Reinforcement is successful with children because it focuses on the positive goals rather than on the negative events that occur.

Give specific praise, and a lot of it.



OREO COOKIE



If negative feedback is required,
use the
“OREO COOKIE” technique.
Sandwich it between positive feedback.

For example:

You did a great job hustling down the
court (P)

Next time wait for a better shot (N) Keep
up the great hustle and the good shots
will be there for you (P)

When you praise a child, it is best to be specific with your words. Obviously saying something like "great job" or "nice shot" is better than nothing but being specific helps to promote the positive behavior or the behavior you want. The players will also feel like you are paying attention to what they do if you are specific with your praise.

"Good job running the break" is better than "good job."
And "way to be tough setting that hard screen" is better than "Way to be tough out there."

Let them know exactly what you want.



Tactic #8

Set Tangible Goals

Setting short, medium, and long terms goals can be a very effective motivation technique. The key is to set tangible goals (things that can be measured) and also provide frequent feedback.

The key here is not overdoing it with too many goals and taking care to choose realistic goals that mean something. Players and teams need goals so that they know what to focus on and what to strive for. But the key is the "type" of goals you choose...

You should NOT set goals for the prestigious statistics, like scoring the most points and even winning games. Players already want those things without setting goals. Not to mention, it gives them the wrong idea.

Know that what motivates some players will not motivate others. It is important to get to know your players as individuals and to know how they will respond individually and as a team to motivational tactics. In the end, if you're involved, excited, and willing to take the time to keep practices interesting, then your team will respond.



Tactic #9

Measure Performance

"When performance is measured, performance improves. When performance is measured and reported back, the rate of improvement significantly accelerates."

There are many things you can measure - team statistics, individual's statistics, high fives, compliments, player satisfaction rating, and so on.

Posting reports, sharing them in practice, and talking about them will make players more aware of how they are performing.

The key is to share the data. You don't even need to set goals. Simply sharing the data improves performance and motivates.

Be careful not to share too many measurements and stats. That will dilute what you are trying to accomplish. Only share and post the critical numbers that are most important to the team and your players.



Tactic #10

Conduct Occasional Tests

Another way to measure performance is to conduct occasional tests

Several times during the year you can conduct evaluation tests. You can do a test in the off season, pre-season, mid-season, and post-season. This is just an example. The frequency of the test is up to you. If your evaluation test is very simple, you could even conduct it weekly.

You can test strength, shooting accuracy (percentage) in various drills, ball handling skills, speed, speed while dribbling the ball, quickness, and so on. The number of things you can test are endless.

Think about WHAT IS IMPORTANT to you and your team. Then think about what you can measure to determine if you're doing a good job in that area.



Tactic #11

Show You Care and Improve Relationships

One of the best ways to motivate players is to show that you care about them outside of basketball.

Get to know your players as individuals. Spend time talking to them one on one. It doesn't have to be for hours; a couple of minutes will do the trick. The point is to let them know that they're important to you on and off the basketball court.

Demonstrate that you care about players by showing a sincere interest in what they do OUTSIDE of basketball. For example, you could attend their choir concerts, soccer games, baseball games, or whatever they participate in. Help them with school. Get to know them. Support them. Show a genuine interest. This will show them that you really care about them and will help you build a better relationship. And once they believe you truly care, they will go to war for you.



Tactic #12

Inspire Players

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires."

--William A. Ward



Many coaches start every practice with a "Quote of the Day". Many times, it is something motivational from a pro player or coach. And they sometimes end practice with another quote.

By searching on the internet you can find hundreds of inspirational poems and quotes. Not to mention dozens of books that are available. Here are just a few resources:

<http://www.inspirational-quotes-and-quotations.com/basketball-quotes.html>

<http://www.coachingtoolbox.net/filingcabinet/basketball-quotes.html>

<http://www.basketballsbest.com/motivate.htm>

<http://www.jimabbott.info/motivationalquotations.html>

Tactic #13

Find Out What Makes Each Player Tick

Some players are (realistically) motivated to play at the next level (or levels); while others are not. Larry Bird was motivated by his fear of playing poorly. Every player gets motivated in different ways. For some it is the "rah rah" session; others take a more focused, quiet approach. You have to know who is who.

Here is a thought for you to ponder: Everyone is motivated by the same thing, success.

The difference in people leads to different definitions of success. In basketball, it can be winning, playing time, scoring a lot of points, just making the team, attracting a cheerleader or any number of other things that exist in the world. It is the coach's job to find out what motivates each of his players. It might be different things at different times of the year and it will definitely be different for different people



Tactic #15

Make Practices and Drills Fun & Competitive

All human beings are more motivated by things they enjoy; so try to have FUN, especially with youth players!!! As the players get older, adding a competitive aspect to practice can really drive the players to work harder

Do you think players are going to be motivated to work hard if they know drills are going to be monotonous, super hard, and they'll be yelled at by drill sergeants?



Of course not!

Players need to work hard but IF they are having fun at practice you know that you will get the best out of them. Learn to laugh with them, even if it's at your expense.

Most importantly, kids enjoy succeeding. So be sure to run drills and put kids in situations where they can succeed.

- Keep kids moving. No standing in lines.
- Use multifaceted drills that are stimulating.

Tactic #15

Establish Habits

Playing hard should not be something you do in the fourth quarter at the end of the game. Playing hard should be a habit that you do ALL THE TIME.

One key is to get in the habit of playing hard, no matter what. You go hard in practice, in each drill, and every minute of the game, no matter what.

Another key is for players to develop a habit of giving 100%. If they give 100% in practice, they will give 100% in a game. They won't know how to play any different.

This is practically the ONLY way to maintain intensity throughout the entire season. Without good habits, you're bound to have major inconsistency and swings.



Tactic #16

Competition

One of the most common ways to motivate players is by adding competition to your drills and practice.

Most players are more motivated when there is something on the line. Plus adding some competition here and there can make it more fun for your players. So you may want to consider designing practices and workouts that are competitive.

Be careful though, because **comparisons** between teammates can make some players feel badly about themselves and can spur rivalries between teammates. In short, it can squash a player's motivation.

Competition can be very beneficial, but could also sometimes hinder skill development. So when learning a brand new skill, you should remove competition and have all players get as many reps as possible.



Tactic #17

Create Unparalleled Drive by Promoting Teamwork

Consider emphasizing teamwork in your practices and games. Remind players that they are stronger by working together.

The hardest working teams are often good friends, respect each other, believe in teamwork, and have camaraderie. Teams like this win championships, work hard, play for each other, and achieve the highest success.

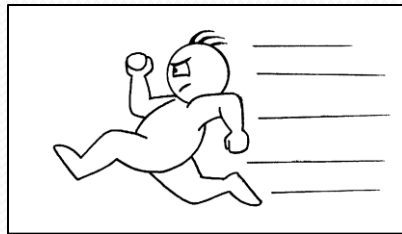
In addition, teach your players commitment, in particular, commitment to the team and themselves. Many young athletes have never committed to anything in their lives.

Learning to commit to one thing will help them learn to commit to other things such as schoolwork, relationships, staying in shape, social causes, religious beliefs.



Tactic #18

Keep Practice Fresh Fast- Paced and Moving Recognize the Importance of Player Motivation



To motivate kids, keep your practice moving! Try not spending a lot of time on any one aspect of the game. Be short and to the point. Maybe 5-7 minutes tops on half court drills, 10 to 12 minutes on full court drills. If they are not getting it, then drop it and move on. Either come back to it later or the next day.

Don't dwell on things for too long. Remember it is a development process, usually not **instantaneous results**.

Make sure that you adhere to your practice plan. Do NOT go past your scheduled time. Start on time and end on time. Teaches young people to respect time management and develops good habits..

Tactic #19

Implement a “Reward System”

Many coaches have had great success by implementing reward systems. Of course, you can't completely rely on a reward system. You must compliment your system with other motivation techniques and find a combination of techniques that work for you.

Just be sure that you do not “over” reward so it doesn't become meaningless



Tactic #20

Take a Break



**DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT
OR
JUST**



**PRACTICE
TONIGHT
CANCELLED**

TAKE A BREAK

**NEXT PRACTICE
FRIDAY 6:30pm**