

COMMUNICATION IN SPORT

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brief introduction ...

- We live in the **age of science, education, culture and sport**, when the need for highly professional experts is huge, and when the necessity to participate in sport as a prerequisite for a long, quality life is indisputable.
- Sport or body culture represents a significant factor of health prevention and education. From the social and political perspective, sport is a significant element of overall social reproduction.
- The benefit of sport as a way of activating the human body and maintaining its abilities has been known about since ancient times. Precisely this factor is a significant prerequisite for the quality of life of modern people.

- Science and technology today are constantly changing the conditions of human life at an extraordinarily quick pace. The enormous increase in knowledge, which *nota bene* today every 7 year multiply 5x , and tremendous power in the hands of humankind through powerful technology, make the quintessence of our civilisation.
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- The rhythm of modern life influences our customs and habits, **the way we communicate**, and also the way we relax and entertain ourselves.
- However, the development of modern society – the society that we are systematically building and that has already been partially built on the results of the scientific-technological revolution and high technology as a social system; the society that will have to provide a human dimension to this imminent technological revolution – is still contradictory: it is at the same time both creative and destructive.

- Economical and technological developments increase the production of material technical goods, but they also weaken the biological basis of humans.
- But without economical and technical progress, our future goals as humans cannot be achieved: it shall not be possible to overcome backwardness and poverty, to achieve personal integrity and the completeness of our existence.
- However, our entire experience up to the present day has shown that economical and technical progress is pointless, and to a certain extent probably impossible, without the simultaneous development of humankind's ability to use this progress for human purposes.
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- Let us remind ourselves of the old yet somehow Nostradamus-like saying by Potter: **"Dangerous knowledge is knowledge that has accumulated faster than the wisdom to manage it." (Potter, 1970)**

- At the beginning of the third millennium, **humankind is facing new challenges.**
- Inevitable globalisation processes are changing the way of life in social communities and are also putting new paradigms in front of every single individual. Terms such as competition, victory and failure, and choice, are becoming dominant and require new life skills.
- In modern life and work, physical or sporting activities have become the *conditio sine qua non* for the further development of society: they are a highly important daily necessity.
- The everyday expansion of information, accumulation of knowledge, and educational systems provide humans with a deeper insight into the reality of their existence and enable them to look afresh for the balance which modern technology and society have taken away from them.

- Communication (from Latin *commūnicāre*, meaning "to share") is the activity of conveying information through the exchange of ideas, feelings, intentions, attitudes, expectations, perceptions or commands,
- as by speech, non-verbal gestures, writings ...
- It is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more participants (machines, organisms or their parts)
- **ORAL (VERBAL) COMMUNICATION**
- **NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION**



- **Oral communication**, while primarily referring to spoken verbal communication, can also employ visual aids and non-verbal elements to support the conveyance of meaning.
- Oral communication includes speeches, presentations, discussions, and aspects of interpersonal communication.
- As a type of **face-to-face communication**, **body language and choice tonality play** a significant role, and may have a greater impact upon the listener than informational content.
- This type of communication also garners immediate feedback, and generally involves the cooperative principle.



- **Nonverbal communication** describes the process of conveying meaning in the form of non-word messages.
- Some forms of non verbal communication include chronemics, haptics, gesture, **body language** or posture, **facial expression** and **eye contact**, object communication such as clothing, hairstyles, architecture, symbols, infographics, and **tone of voice**, as well as through an aggregate of the above.
- Speech also contains nonverbal elements known as **paralanguage**.
- This form of communication is the most known for interacting with people.



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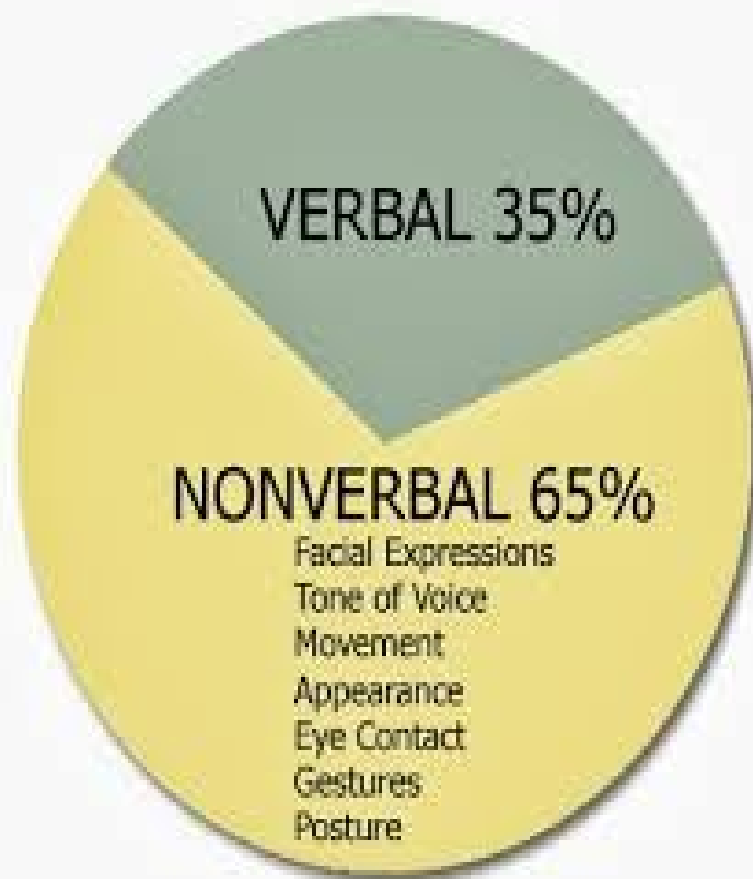
What you say

38 %

How you say

55 %

How you look



- Communication between athletes and coaches is the nucleus of good relationship in sports which is directly reflected on the sports scores as well on success in sport.
- Communication is the art of successfully sharing meaningful information with people by means of an interchange of experience.
- Communication in sport is the process in which messages are created, exchanged, interpreted and stored within a system of human relation in sport.



- The success of any coach, at perhaps every level of competition, is determined by his or her ability to **effectively communicate with athletes** and in turn getting them to better communicate with each other.
- It's easy to focus primarily on the technical elements of sport — putting together good game plans and teaching good technique — but also easy to lose sight of the need to communicate effectively.
- Coaches may be knowledgeable and highly organised, but **without good communication skills**, these attributes may never be reflected in the performance of their athletes.

Coaches, ask yourself these questions

- Do you encourage athletes to speak up?
- Do you pay attention to body language?
- Do you recognise signs of dehydration and fatigue?
- Communicating would be easier if athletes always told coaches when there was a problem.
- However, research suggests that 65% of communication is non-verbal. That's why it is important for coaches to watch for signals that indicate something is wrong.
- **Coaches skilled in reading their athletes and who encourage them to speak up** can successfully prevent the effects of dehydration or injury, assist in skill development, and bolster athletes' confidence.
- (Petlichkoff 2002)

Athlete and Team Communication



Athlete and Team Communication

- Establish open lines of communication with your players.
- Ask questions that specifically address injuries, hydration status, and recovery.
- Pay attention to both the verbal and non-verbal messages your athletes send.
- If they look tired and lack effort, they may be sending an important non-verbal message about their hydration and nutrition status or their need for additional rest.
- **Be approachable**



- Hearing what your athletes say and understanding them are distinctly different.
- When in doubt, paraphrase what they say, so they know you are listening.
- For example, 'What you are saying is...' or 'Are you suggesting that ...' helps athletes know you are listening and understand their concerns.

- **Be an active listener**



- Give every athlete a sense of how he or she fits into the big picture.
- By recognising the role each of your players contributes to the team, you give your athletes a sense of worth and achievement.
- You should instil in every team member a sense that they can improve their status by hard work and commitment.

- **Define roles**



- Encourage your athletes to set realistic goals and communicate how to achieve them.
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- Discuss the differences between individual and team goals and the need to sometimes sacrifice personal goals for team objectives.
- The ability to set goals with a sense of purpose is a life skill that will help your athletes beyond their sport.

- **Set goals**



- Positive relationships are built on mutual respect and trust.
- Your athletes must know that they can depend on you to be fair and positive, even in intense competition.
- Criticise behaviours or decision-making, but leave personality out of it.
- Criticism must be constructive, positive, consistent, and oriented around improving performance.
- None of your players will improve when made to feel worse about themselves.
- **Establish mutual trust**



Boss vs. Coach

The boss ...

- Talks a lot
- Tells
- Fixes
- Presumes
- Seeks control
- Orders
- Works on
- Puts products first
- Wants reasons
- Assigns blame
- Keeps distance

The coach ...

- Listens a lot
- Asks
- Prevents
- Explores
- Seeks commitment
- Challenges
- Works with
- Puts process first
- Seeks results
- Takes responsibility
- Makes contact

Source: *Effective Coaching* by Michael J. Cook. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1999)

Communicate with a positive approach

- When providing **constructive feedback**, think good, better, how
 - **Good** — start with something they did correctly
 - **Better** — give instructional feedback on how to get better
 - **How** — finish with a compliment so they want to get better
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- It is generally accepted that **sport teaches us values** and the content of these values, therefore it is utterly important how these values are practised, and more specifically, whether these values are positive or negative.



- Within the context of a disciplined and structured environment, empower your athletes to make decisions and control various aspects of a game or competition.
- Thoroughly teach concepts with each athlete understanding his/her part.
- Then, charge your athletes to execute their part by making adjustments on the run and communicating problems with you.
- **Responsibility and authority must go hand in hand.**
- Avoid coaching a fear of failure into your methods of communication and encourage risk taking as an integral part of athletic competition.

- Plan for communication opportunities just as you plan for game structure. Opportunities for communication can be as simple as searching out an athlete after a difficult practice and asking if they understand the reasons for the criticisms given.
- Your athletes can only apply coaching guidance in so far as they understand what is desired of them.
- An excellent technique for developing lines of communications is a **season-end interview**. You can engage an athlete in '20 questions' in a quiet environment so that they **feel you are interested in them as a person**

Better teamwork is an interaction of five key elements (Lenti 1996):

- **Effective communications** — Clear, positive communications from coach to coach, coach to athlete, and athlete to athlete are essential in establishing the concept of 'teamwork'. All team members and staff will clearly understand team goals and work toward the achievement of stated objectives.

Better teamwork is an interaction of five key elements (Lenti 1996):

- **Winning attitudes** — We all know that athletes with good attitudes are usually the ones who will contribute most to the team. It's not enough to inspire good attitudes in individual players: a 'team attitude' is necessary to build the kind of teamwork needed for success.
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- A good team attitude can be defined by **how well your athletes accept their roles and responsibilities to the team**. The star role is relatively easy to accept, but it is equally important for the team specialists and back-ups to understand and accept their roles and responsibilities.
- Encourage this kind of attitude by setting an example: accept all the responsibilities of your position as coach, not just the ones that you like.

Better teamwork is an interaction of five key elements (Lenti 1996):

- **Team ego** — Once players understand and accept their roles on the team, it is possible to take the concept of 'team attitude' one step farther to 'team ego.'
- This simply means that players must overcome their own egos for the good of the entire team.



Better teamwork is an interaction of five key elements (Lenti 1996):

- **Motivation**
- Your athletes must be given reasons to be motivated to achieve success for the team.
- Set up a continuing system of motivation by setting long-term goals and by encouraging your athletes to achieve them by meeting a series of short-term goals. Include personal, academic and career goals as well.
- By measuring progress in small steps, your athletes are given an ongoing sense of achievement that keeps their motivation high.
- Your athletes can also motivate each another. Split players into drill groups and score them as a team rather than as individuals, make your players feel they have a vested interest in each other.



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Better teamwork is an interaction of five key elements (Lenti 1996):

- **Discipline**
- The establishment and maintenance of positive communications, team attitudes and egos, and motivation depends heavily on the final element of teamwork — discipline.
- **Discipline is the glue that holds everything else together.** Remember that discipline, if used fairly and consistently, is a positive force in building teamwork.
- Rules are a part of discipline so make sure the rules you do have are consistent with team goals, are realistic, and are enforceable.
- Also develop self-discipline — ‘what one does when no one is watching’.
- Help athletes develop self-discipline through:
 - a) setting goals,
 - b) clearly communicating your expectations of them and maintaining those standards, and
 - c) demanding the best effort from each of them, whether in practice, in the classroom, or in the game.

THEY DO IT



➤ THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION



■ References

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