

ARE YOU A TEAM PLAYER?

Coaches understand that getting a group of individuals to work together is not easy. Personalities and attitudes may prevent a team from working cohesively. This involves getting the players to think as one instead of thinking independently. Imagine the chaos if everyone did their own thing.

Visualise a team where the lead only rolls short ends because that's what he prefers. The second runs at the head every time the opposition puts a bowl close to the jack while the third ignores the skip's instructions.

Add to the mix, a skip that demands perfection and is void of the leadership skills required to guide their team and you have a recipe for disaster.

I spend a lot of time helping players work together in a team environment. This entails building trust among the players. Each player needs to feel he has the support of every player in the team.

Activities used in corporate team building are used to demonstrate the roles team members take on and how these roles are vital if a team wants to perform at its best. Getting players to work together in implementing a game plan allows individuals to work together to achieve the same goal.

Understanding the stages of group development such as forming, storming, norming and performing can help players not only implement the game plan but also realise the importance behind the development of the plan. This is the starting point where individual players become a TEAM. Being part of a team means added responsibility.

Coaches don't often get the opportunity to work with a full team or side due to the fact that not everyone in the team has the same attitude towards the benefit of training. This not only makes it hard for the coach but also for the team as they can never train as a complete unit.

Everyone understands that work and family commitments must come first but when the only thing that prevents a player from training with his/her teammates is their negative attitude towards training, I would start to question their position within that team. A team is made up of a group of individuals that must work together to get results.

COMMUNICATION is another important area of team work. I utilise many activities to demonstrate the importance of communication which can be done both on and off the green. Without positive communication a team cannot survive. Communication is not only conveyed verbally ... bad body language can also affect team morale.

Implementing strategies to deal with CONFLICT as soon as it appears will prevent negative communication destroying team harmony. Conflict can either be positive or negative yet it is common to only see conflict in a negative sense. We can learn a lot from conflict although we often try to avoid it and pretend it does not exist. Conflict can stop us, but handled properly, it allows us to move forward. Happy players play better bowls while stressed players don't play at their best.

Recently I observed a team that was demonstrating good communication skills and you could see that each member of the team was enjoying the game. As soon as the team was told by an observer that they needed to be serious and concentrate, they started to slip backwards on the scoreboard and the team morale disappeared. This shows how easily negative input can destroy a team.

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