

## **“BUILDING A WINNING TEAM”.**

Excerpts from the book, “Building a Winning Team” with chapters by successful Australian motivators and coaches in a variety of sports.

**Introduction:** Success in sport is built on winning teams. Winning coaches mould teams with the chemistry, ambition and the drive to achieve.

It is a matter of recognising that a team is made up of different individuals who bring their own elements to the dynamics of the group.

Build on those differences and ensure all the players are heading in the same direction. One common thread for successful coaches is they focus on the individual as much as on the team. While the primary motivation is the team, they concentrate as much on motivating and developing the individual. The individual is the key to building a winning team.

### **Ron Barassi: (“Enthusiasm Will Win the Day”) - AFL Rules.**

Success requires tenacity and thorough commitment. Set high standards which come from an inherent hatred of defeat. My number one rule is you must love what you do before you can convey that enthusiasm to those around you. The key to success is to know your limitations. Always strive to do the best you can which is more important than winning itself. Success is not what you achieve, it’s what you achieve with what you have.

Look at each game in perspective and make sure not to give it too much weight. Winners have to use a certain type of discipline to stop them becoming complacent. Winning brings with it a sense of responsibility and the need to have the character to deal with it.

To team leaders, aim high, but don’t expect your team members to do anything you wouldn’t do yourself, especially in the spheres of motivation and discipline. If you don’t practise what you preach, you will lose credibility with your players.

Personal motivation is one of the hallmarks of a successful coach and team leader. Leaders need to understand they can’t do it all. In the end, the responsibility must be shared with the players. Give team members credit for what they do.

Make sure the team is able to learn to use their own minds and not just rely on the directions of the coach. Ask them to think and act (in practice) for themselves.

You can’t afford to rely on a handful of key players. All the team must work as a well-oiled, selfless machine. Any attempt to seek personal glory at the expense of the team is frowned upon. Two golden rules when dealing with players – **Be fair and really care** and, above all, **be honest**.

### **John Newcombe: (“Keep Everything in Perspective”) - Tennis.**

The most crucial factor is to have a motivated team. You need strong and motivated leaders who can help developing players strive for their goals. You’ve got to drive all the guys hard, practise hard, build them up, make them believe in themselves. For athletes to play at the peak of their ability they need to believe in themselves. It’s about character and grit, profile and unity.

You have to get along with each other and ‘not to be worried about each other’s ego’. You must be able to communicate, to understand and see problems before they arise. Seek the positive in every situation – even if it is a losing situation.

It’s all for one and one for all. If you pull together, amazing things can happen.

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**Bob Simpson: (“Success, the Biggest Motivation of All”) - Cricket.**

Enthusiasm is no. 1. Good sportsmen are well organised in their thinking and planning, focusing on what they want to achieve and working out how to achieve it. Handling loss(es), the first thing to do is to analyse why you lost. There has to be total honesty and then you can do an analysis of the team and individual performance. Players must understand why they lost and it is important to recognise the problems very quickly without making excuses.

The ideal team member? – natural talent plus plain old determination to succeed and the ability to handle mental pressure. Natural talent alone is not enough, the team is what's it's all about. Getting a good mix of people is crucial. A variety of personalities and temperaments offers a diversity that is a great asset to any team. You want people who are prepared to utilise their skills for the benefit of the team.

Keep star players happy i.e. those who are single-mindedly ambitious. They are individuals – treat them as such but make them appreciate they have a role to play within the team. I don't mind individualism itself but it's only when it's detrimental to the team that's a problem. They must know where they stand in the structure of the team.

**Bob Dwyer: (“Always Seek out the Positives”) - Aust Rugby Coach.**

There is a direct association between motivation and self-confidence.

Accept one's responsibilities and say, “This is my responsibility. No-one's going to do it for me because I'm the one the team's expecting it from”.

After a loss, the cause needs to be worked out and what steps need to be taken to avoid a repeat. A player(s) can achieve higher standards if the 'negatives' from the past are continually worked on to avoid the same mistakes in the future.

Confront any problems or conflict head on. By looking for the good things in people you can always find common ground to some degree. Praise the positives in individuals and dismiss the negatives.

Leaders tend to be developed, not just happen. They are strong and confident in times of stress. They become more focused when the pressure is on and inspire their team to focus to achieve success. Flexibility – believe in looking for the opportunity in every situation.

**Noel Donaldson: (“Conquer Self Doubt”) - Awesome Foursome Coach.**

Discipline, harmony, teamwork, goal-sharing and trust in one another's ability.

Hard work, attention to detail, commitment to goals, confident pro-active risk taking, The love of competition and a burning desire to succeed.

Communication skills are important as well as the ability to consult and listen to the opinions of others. It is better to have conflict, sort out the problem and come back more committed to your goals. Continue to build the confidence of individual members so that they can reach higher challenges. They need to strive to get better, not just repeat their previous performance because that's not satisfactory, it's complacency.