

## COACH COMMUNICATION BY ED RUSH

1. BE OPEN MINDED
  - a. Many of us believe we know a lot--some do, some don't.
  - b. Avoid being that person who is so closed minded to think he knows it all
  - c. Below is a summary of the notes taken at Ed Rush's presentation.
  
2. THINGS TO REMEMBER
  - a. Fast to listen, Slow to Speak
  - b. Use first names if you know both coach's names
  - c. Active listening—have open body language, nod head
  - d. Your Objective in Communication—get to the next play/diffuse situation
  - e. Do not try to get closure—you won't get it
  - f. Let coaches have the last word
  - g. Answer Qs—be direct, less said the better
  - h. Usually do not need to answer statements
  - i. Avoid flashpoints—things that will escalate the situation
  
3. HAVE A PLAN
  - a. We always need to be working on our communication skills
  - b. Every game is different
  - c. Every coach is different
  - d. What works on one coach may not work on another
  - e. What works for one ref may not work for another ref
  - f. We need to have a plan as to how we will approach the coach that night
  - g. Always know the voice of reason
    - 1) Could be assistant coach, captain, player
    - 2) If have a problem, you can go to the voice of reason
    - 3) Ex. "I need your help. \_\_\_\_\_needs to get under control."
  
4. THERE IS NOT ONE WAY THAT WORKS ALL THE TIME
  - a. Each coach, each situation is different
  - b. The way you treat one coach, may not work with another coach
  - c. Prepare your game management skills prior to the game—who are the coaches
  - d. Practice your conflict resolution skills
  - e. Dealing with coaches is like driving on a 7 lane highway
  - f. We want to reduce the lanes down to 3 lanes
  - g. It will never be a single lane (not just one way to resolve conflicts)
  - h. But we do know certain things don't work
  - i. And we do know there is more than one way to get the coach to the next play

5. GOAL=DIFFUSE/GET TO NEXT PLAY
  - a. Your job is to try to get coach/player to the next play
  - b. Your job is diffuse the situation, not ignite it
  - c. It is not your job to show the coach how much you know rules
  - d. Often it is not so much what you say, but how you say it
  - e. Always Remember the goal—diffuse/get to next play—when communicating
  - f. Do not expect closure
  - g. Let coach have the last word
  - h. The less said is almost always better
  - i. Have eye contact
  
6. LISTEN!!!!
  - a. Coaches want refs to hear them, respect them
  - b. Coaches are happy when officials listen
  - c. Refs should listen & tell coaches “I hear you”
  - d. Listening to coaches shows respect
  - e. Be slow to speak, quick to listen
  - f. LISTEN FIRST. Avoid the natural inclination to respond or defend yourself
  
7. WHEN SHOULD YOU TALK
  - a. Ideal to talk during dead ball
  - b. If talk during 2 FTs, you should finish your explanation before start of 2<sup>nd</sup> FT
  - c. If still talk when 2<sup>nd</sup> FT starts, you have talked too long
  - d. If talk during dead ball, be quick, courteous, direct—do not get distracted on different topic
  
8. THINKS TO SAY
  - a. “I hear you”
  - b. “I understand”
  - c. “You may be right”
  - d. “OK, I’ll take a look”
  
9. ADMIT MISTAKES
  - a. It is a show of strength to admit mistakes
  - b. Do not think admitting you’re wrong is a weakness
  - c. Pick your spots
  - d. Cannot be admitting mistakes 3-4x a game
  - e. You will earn respect by being honest
  
10. SAY NOTHING
  - a. If you are being told a statement, you don’t have to respond
  - b. If you don’t know what to say—say nothing
  - c. You cannot misquote silence
  - d. Sometimes saying nothing is the best approach

#### 11. SOME DON'TS

- a. Don't go into huddles to discuss situation (give time & space)
- b. Don't try to show coach how smart you are—remember the goal
- c. Don't give clinics
- d. Don't expect closure
- e. Don't try to get the last word
- f. Do not point at people

#### 12. AVOID "CALM DOWN/RELAX"

- a. Telling an emotional person to calm down rarely calms them down
- b. Telling an emotional person to relax rarely gets person to relax

#### 13. NEED COACHES TO STAY ADULT

- a. Dealing with coaches is often like parent-child relationship
- b. Goal is to keep the conversation adult-to-adult
- c. Official needs to be the parent—not the child
- d. When coach is acting like child, don't become a child as well
- e. We need to get coaches back acting like adult
- f. "Coach, you don't have to yell at me. Just talk to me. What did you see?"

#### 14. SPACE & TIME

- a. In highly emotional situation, give coach space & time:
- b. Space—get away from him/her to allow him/her to calm down
- c. Time—give him/her to get him/her self under control
- d. It is not our job to get coach/player under control—asst. coach or head coach responsible
- e. In the heat of the moment, coach may react spontaneously—let him/her if not trying to embarrass you
- f. Before issuing Ts, give coach time & space to calm down

#### 15. TECHNICAL FOULS

- a. If you have too many Ts, you need to improve at conflict resolution
- b. If you don't have any, you need to take a look at yourself
- c. Technical fouls are part of your tools to handle conflict resolution
- d. However, it should not be the 1<sup>st</sup> thing you seek
- e. Technical is like a hammer you keep in your back pocket when all else fails
- f. It takes some effort to get the hammer
- g. In order to get it, you need to unbutton your pocket & reach back behind you
- h. Generally, you should warn the coach before you issue a T
- i. Have all the information before issuing a T
- j. Once you give T, there is no going back—can't retract
- k. You should use as last resort, when other options failed. This way you will never regret giving a T.

16. EVALUATE THE T

- a. When you issue a T you need to analyze if it was proper
  - 1) Did it fit the situation?
  - 2) Was it effective/did it make game better?
  - 3) Can you and your partner(s) defend it?
- b. If say yes to all 3=good T
- c. If you can't say yes to all 3=not good.

17. ADVANCING

- a. You need to know where you are before you know where you are going
- b. Spend more time trying to improve yourself than promote yourself
- c. If you spend 80% of time on self-improvement & 20% self-promotion = you will advance
- d. If spend 80% of time on self-promotion & 20% on self-improvement, you will get stagnant
- e. Self-promotion is never self-sustaining
- f. But if you continue to seek self-improvement you will stick around/advance no matter the assignor

18. RESPECT

- a. Working hard gains coaches respect
- b. Admitting mistakes gains respect
- c. Listening to the coach gains respect

HAVE A GREAT AND HEALTHY SEASON

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