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Today's Topic

Welcome back to the Coach's Corner!

Today's topic put into one simple word is **Motivation**. We've all heard the term and I bet most of us have struggled with our own levels of motivation at some point in our lives. But today I want to dive a little deeper into what Motivation is, why it can be so powerful, and how we can cultivate it throughout our athletes and our teams.

So, what is Motivation and where does it come from?

Depending on what articles you read and what research you cite, we can see motivation being broken down into a million different 'styles'. But at the end of the day, there are 2 major types of motivation that drive us and our athletes:

1. Intrinsic Motivation
2. Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation is often defined as 'partaking in an activity because of the pleasure or enjoyment that the activity brings us personally.'

So, doing something simply because it you are passionate about it or you enjoy it, would be driven by your Intrinsic Motives.

Maybe you go out for track every year, but it's not because your goal is to become an Olympian, instead you have fallen in love with the feeling of running outdoors and pushing yourself to better your times each and every meet.

An intrinsically motivated athlete will often be very driven to work and compete, but not as concerned with the overall results of their performance. This type of motivation can be extremely powerful because there aren't as many 'outside factors' tied to your performance.

This allows athletes to stay more 'process oriented', enjoy the activity itself, and not worry as much if they were to have a poor performance.

For example: I LOVE to golf, but I know that there is pretty much a 0% chance that I will ever play on the PGA Tour. For me, I love to golf because it allows me to get outside, away from a screen, enjoy the views and scenery of different courses, and compete against my previous best score. My love for the game of golf is almost entirely intrinsically driven, but that still doesn't change the fact that I want to score well and continue improving as a player.

Intrinsic Motives are very powerful, but when they are combined with a little Extrinsic Motivation, then we are looking at a great formula for a highly motivated athlete.

Extrinsic Motivation is defined as 'partaking in an activity because of the expectation of a reward or the fear of a punishment at the conclusion of the activity.'

Simply put; you are motivated to do something because you will be rewarded for completing it or you are afraid of what will happen if you don't complete it.

Extrinsic Motivation can look completely different depending on whether it is reward/accomplishment driven or fear driven.

For Example:

1. Maybe you play High School basketball with the ultimate goal of getting a Division I scholarship and eventually playing in the NBA. AWESOME! If this is the case, I wish you the best of luck and hope all your dreams come true. That goal of reaching the NBA is an Extrinsic Motive.

2. Or maybe, you know if you don't play your best tonight, you will get an earful from your parents when you get home. This situation is a little more complex and not quite as healthy of a motive as the one discussed previously. This fear of getting scolded is also an Extrinsic Motive.

While both of these examples seem drastically different, they are both forms of Extrinsic Motivation.

The extrinsic motives of wanting to win a big trophy and some money, or make it to a higher level of competition can both be very effective. They can push you to train harder and prevent you from letting anything get in your way.

However, fear driven motivation can get a little dicey because eventually that fear can run out or you will have to keep raising the level of fear until it gets out of hand and you can't push it any higher.

So just like anything, Extrinsic Motivation can be very effective if used properly and balanced well to fit your own personal situation.

Although there are two different major categories of motivation, there isn't a right and a wrong type of motivation, which is a common misconception I hear. Oftentimes we fall into the trap of demonizing Extrinsic Motivation too much and trying to avoid it at all costs. Don't get me wrong, extrinsic motives have their downfalls, but that doesn't mean an extrinsic motive can't still be effective for some athletes and some teams.

The strongest forms of motivation are a perfect combination of both Extrinsic and Intrinsic, but that combination depends on each athlete and each team's dynamic specifically.

So if I want to find this perfect balance for myself or my team, how do I do that?

...and this is where the rabbit hole begins...

How Can I Apply This?

As a coach, how do I utilize this information and get my athletes to be more motivated? How do I get them to show up to practice every single day just as motivated as the day before? or Why aren't they as motivated as I am?

These are all good questions that coaches ask themselves every day.

Answering these questions can unlock a whole new potential for your team, so here I am going to offer some tips to utilize both Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation to take your team's mentality to the next level.

1. Know Your Athletes

If I want my athletes to compete their hardest and strive to be better every single day, I first have to know what it is that drives them. Are they more intrinsically or extrinsically motivated?

Once we know which type of motivation an athlete prefers, we can then game plan around that and offer them the proper 'rewards' to feed that motivation.

One great way to do this is by having athletes share their motivations. Having them explain who or what it is that pushes them to show up every single day. Having them tell you and all of their teammates about who they are and what is driving them every day.

My favorite activity for this is called the 'Box of WHYs' where I would have every single coach and athlete involved with the team take a notecard and write out why they play the sport and what they hope to get out of it. Then have everyone take turns sharing what they wrote to the rest of the group. Then you take all the notecards, put them in a box, and keep that box with the team throughout the season as a constant reminder that everyone is driven by something and we can use all those different motives to push toward a common goal.

This activity allows everyone to better understand each other, building that team camaraderie we are all striving for, as well as helping coaches get a better understanding of whether their team is primarily intrinsically or extrinsically motivated.

Along with this activity, simply having conversations with your athletes about things other than the sport you are coaching. Getting to know your athletes as people first and athletes second helps you understand them more holistically and lets the athletes see that there is more than just wins and losses. Instead, there is a true, caring relationship between you and them.

2. Utilizing Rewards

On the surface this may sound a little weird, and I would agree. I am not advocating for giving out participation ribbons or giving physical prizes for a good performance. But there are still ways to reward athletes and feed that extrinsic motive without tarnishing the feeling of accomplishment (*which can happen with 'participation ribbons', etc.*).

Instead of giving out a physical prize, you could do something along the lines of this:

If your team has an amazing high energy practice or training session, you let them choose the last drill or activity for the day.

Or instead of the typical 'end of practice' conditioning, mix it up and have them play a game that is completely different from the rest of practice.

For example:

As a baseball coach, if we had a great week of practice leading into our weekend games and myself and my other coaches felt that our athletes deserved to be rewarded for their hard work throughout the week we would finish the practice with games of Ultimate Frisbee.

This was a drastic switch from our normal baseball specific drills, but it did so much for us.

It got our conditioning in, it mixed up the monotony of everyday practice, and it kept things competitive.

Coaches are some of the most creative and 'outside the box' people I have ever met, so use that... Think outside the box and come up with creative ways to reward your athletes and feed that extrinsic motivation that so many athletes have.

This section could have been 10,000 words long because there are so many different ways to do it, but these are just a few different ways that I have found to utilize both intrinsic and

extrinsic motivations to push athletes to always compete and strive to become better.

Motivation is the backbone of any successful athlete or program, so finding ways to cultivate it and use it as a tool rather than a hinderance is the key to constant improvement and success.

If you have any questions or are looking for new ways to talk about motivation with your team, please feel free to reach out. I would love to help!

This Week In Sports

1. Maia Chaka made NFL history last Sunday.

Last weekend in a game between the New York Jets and the Carolina Panthers, Maia Chaka broke a major barrier in the NFL, becoming the first black woman to officiate an NFL game.

Only a handful of years ago, in 2015, Sarah Thomas became the first female referee in NFL history. She has since held her position as a referee and went on to officiate Super Bowl LV last year becoming the first woman to do so.

Speaking about earning the opportunity to referee an NFL game, Chaka said: ***"This historic moment to me is an honor and it's a privilege that I've been chosen to represent women and women of color in the most popular sport in America, proving that I can defy the odds and overcome."***

In a completely male dominated sport like football, it is amazing to see women break barriers every single year and leave their mark on history.

Just like Chaka's quote, instances like this can speak to women, men, and children alike showing us that truly anything is possible. No matter what you are up against or how hard the journey may seem, anyone can accomplish something amazing!

Congratulations to Maia Chaka and everyone else out there blazing trails for the rest of us.

2. Patrick Mahomes breaks 2 more records.

I wish I could say I was surprised, but come on... It's Patrick Mahomes, breaking records seems to be second nature to this guy.

Last Sunday in the Kansas City Chiefs first game of the season (a great win over the Cleveland Browns) Mahomes shattered 2 different long standing NFL records. Both records revolving around his first 50 career starts in the NFL.

The first record belonged to **Dan Marino** who held the record for throwing 116 touchdowns through his first 50 career starts.

The second record belonged to **Kurt Warner** who held the record for throwing for 14,372 yards through his first 50 career starts.

On Sunday Mahomes eclipsed both of these marks and is now sitting at 117 passing touchdowns and 14,489 yards.

The real kicker here is that Sunday was only Mahomes' 47th career start in the NFL. Meaning that he shattered both of these records with 3 games to spare! Now over the next 3 weeks Mahomes will have the opportunity to set both of these records even higher and etch his name into the NFL history books for decades to come.

Let's hope he can keep this pace up and lead the Chiefs to another Super Bowl win this year!

Other Sport Psych Resources

1. A new 'Mental Sweat Monday' video clip from the great Hannah Huesman.

Hannah Huesman is the Mental Performance Coach for the Philadelphia Phillies and one of the most popular mental strength coaches on social media. She has not only become famous

for her great work with the Phillies, but also for her social media video series, 'Mental Sweat Monday'.

Every Monday, Hannah releases a short 1 minute video clip talking about a different mental skill or something in the realm of sport and performance psychology. This week she covered her 'AAA of Mental Performance'.

The 'AAA' being: *Anticipate, Accept, and Adjust.*

In this short video she breaks down these three terms and explains how they can improve mental performance before, during, and after performances.

If you don't already follow Hannah Huesman on social media I highly recommend doing so, she is one of the best in the game.

[Watch the full video HERE.](#)

*Hey, while you're scrolling social media don't be afraid to follow **Strecker Sport Psychology** on all of our social media pages as well! (Links Below)*



2. A great article excerpt from Zach Brandon, Mental Skills Coordinator for the Arizona Diamondbacks.

This article is taken from the [Leaders in Sport Performance Journal](#), which is one of the leading outlets out there for sport and performance psychology information.

Zach was interviewed about his role in the Diamondback's organization and he talks about the role mental performance plays with athletes and staff in their organization, as well as how far it has come over the past two years. Zach also speaks at length about the importance of destigmatizing mental health and mental skills training in order to continue growing the field and providing this information for as many coaches, athletes, and administrators as possible.

Zach Brandon is another Mental Skills Coach that is at the top of the field. And this article is a great read that includes some awesome insight into a Major League Baseball organization.

[Read the full article HERE.](#)

Quick Quote



"The human body is an incredible machine, but most people only get out of that machine what their mind allows them to."

-Rich Froning Jr.

4x Crossfit Games Champion

Thank you for reading and until next week, remember:

Today is a great day to change a life!

Cheers,

Bryce Strecker M.S.

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