

Coaches Under Pressure

This is a time in sports where coaches can feel just as much if not more pressure than their athletes...the pressure to advance in the playoffs and possibly win championships, such as what high school spring sport coaches and those in the NBA are facing now, or to have a great start to the season, like coaches in MLB. Coaches, especially high school coaches, may be feeling the heat from parents about their gameplans or playing time for their kids. Many of these pressures are off the field issues, but may directly influence a coach's on the field behaviors.

Here are some strategies that coaches can use to cope effectively when they are feeling these and other pressures:

- The importance of an established coaching philosophy is often overlooked. Most successful coaches have created a coaching philosophy that is at the foundation from which they build winning programs. Establish your philosophy, write it down, share it with assistant coaches and your athletes.
- Set goals and review them often. Coaches often set goals for their teams, but may fail to set goals for themselves. It is important to set personal coaching goals and review them to gauge their success or improve their ability to accomplish these goals. Often these goals will be directly related to the coach's overarching philosophy.
- Focus on what you can control. Unfortunately, you cannot control the administration, a player's performance, the officials, or players' parents. The key is to find out what you can control and focus on these items such as your gameplan, preparation, and emotions throughout a game. You'll find the amount of things you can control will grow as your coaching philosophy permeates through the team.
- Find a confidant. Talk to your assistant coaches, friends, or significant others about what you are experiencing. Their perspective on the issue may be enlightening for you.
- If difficulties persist, consider bringing in a sport consultant to help enhance your coaching or work with your coaching staff.

At the Center for Sport Psychology and Performance Excellence at the University of North Texas, we have a staff of focused and committed sport consultants who will work with coaches to help them bring out their potential as a coach. For more information about our services please call us at 940-369-7767, email us at sportpsych@unt.edu, or check out our website at www.sportpsych.unt.edu. As usual, we leave you with our sport quote of the week:

"A good coach will make his players see what they can be rather than what they are."
Ara Parasheghian