

Coaching Secrets I've Learned through the Years

Know the Difference between Winning and Losing

You win with:

- Superior Personnel. Not just talent, but personnel. As in, who you are using and where you are utilizing them. Yes, a team needs highly skilled (fast, strong, talented) players. However, it needs football players more than it does athletes. Putting players in the right spot for your offense/defense is what makes your personnel. Make sure it is maximized
- Superior Conditioning. Both physical and mental conditioning are vital. Strength of mind often determines strength of body.
- Superior Attitude. Players need to be taught how to focus and to develop their mental attitudes. Too many times I've been around people who could not re-focus once some unfortunate happened. Their mental attitude was poor, and it typical led to more 'misfortune' as they were unable to overcome that small bit of adversity.
- Superior Teaching. I call it teaching, rather than coaching, because I truly believe we are teaching our players football (much like a professor teaches his class about chemistry). Coaching, well, that is merely the name I give to it. The coaching staff that can teach their players the proper techniques to execute their schemes will have a distinct advantage. It is easy to talk football, and hard to apply. Teaching movements, blocking, tackling, etc. are the things that win. What you know has very little bearing on the game, it's what your players know and can execute.
- Fewer Mistakes. If you properly take care of the first 4, then, by the nature of your teaching, conditioning, attitude, and personnel matchup, your team should make few mistakes. Elimination of missed assignments, penalties, missed blocks, and missed tackles is the real proof of your ability as a coach.

Sell Your System

Decide what offensive/defensive system you will use. Totally sell your team that your system is the best. Make believers of them and use "propaganda" whenever possible. Make sure to use the words "our program" as opposed to "my program" (and even "their program"). Using "our", "we", "us", etc. helps bring everyone together and show that we are all in the same boat together. Convince them you have a well thought out reason for everything you do and everything they are asked to do. They must believe that what you are asking them to do is for their ultimate good. Sell your program to the public as well. This includes student body, faculty, parents, boosters, news media, and the 'future' players (elementary & middle school). What they think of you and your program is highly important. Their opinion and the environment it creates affects your players. The more successful you are in handling the people in these areas, the more success you should enjoy. Likewise, you will have fewer headaches and problem.

You Must Have Discipline

Instill in each player at the very beginning what you expect of them in regards to: practice, equipment, locker room, dress, school work, training guidelines, relationship with teachers, coaches, and teammates. Get rid of those who can't follow the rules. It's usually ok to have one jackass, but not 2, because they'll breed. You won't win with jokers and without discipline on the team, you have nothing. Be firm and fair. Teach and stress character, accountability, and self-discipline.

Be For the Players

Do something extra for your players. Let them see you "going to battle" for them. They must see you throughout the year. Attend other sporting events. Be visible. If a player is convinced of your extra efforts for them, then he is more likely to give extra effort of his own. Be sincerely interested in them outside of football. Take pride in their achievements, both athletic and otherwise. Show interest in every player on the team. Remember, each one goes home and talks to their parents about their coach.

There is Nothing Like Winning

Winning is the ultimate prize. You must sell your players on this. Once they realize what the reward for the work is, that there is no other, they will strive to win. The only players to use are those that *really* want to win. They must believe football is of the utmost importance.

Remember:

There is no game that is as important as the one you are preparing for.