

COACHING TIPS ✓✓✓

No Need to Yell Coach!

In some sports coaches have a unique opportunity to talk to players and a referee during the game and the stereotype of these coaches is stalking along the sideline, yelling at players or officials.

John Gross investigated the effectiveness of field of play coaching behaviours in national league matches. One of his findings was:

Winning coaches produce more general technical instructions, specific encouragement, and verbal reinforcement than do losing coaches.... On the other hand losing coaches display more punishment accompanying a mistake, comments to officials, and nonverbal reinforcement.

I surveyed basketball, football and netball athletes and coaches to investigate how coaches interacted with players during the game and how effective it was.

The survey results indicated that coaches should:

- Make the majority of behaviours verbal (e.g. say *nice pass*). Players are less likely to observe a nonverbal behaviour (e.g. a *thumbs up*)
- In particular female players said that even if they notice a nonverbal behaviour it seldom changes their behaviour
- Avoid verbal or nonverbal punishment as both players and coaches perceive it has little effect on player performance
- Avoid displaying general disapproval (e.g. shaking your head). Coaches in this study were unaware of how often they exhibited such behaviours. Players indicated they do not like this type of behaviour
- Players place more importance on behaviours (such as technical instruction), designed to improve/change future play
- When coaching female players, limit coaching behaviours during play to technical instructions or verbal encouragement
- Other behaviours are unlikely to be observed and, even if they are observed are unlikely to lead to a change in behaviour

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

'When you accept the challenge to coach you must also accept the responsibility to never stop learning.' **Ken Lowry**