



## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR SPORTS COACHES

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Communication skills play a vital role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century both at home and workplace. Effective coaching skills include effective communicative skills. Coach's responsibility is to improve the performance of a player as well as to build positive relationships with parents, colleagues and administrators. Generally, non verbal communication is used in sports management. It is important to master both verbal and non verbal communication skills. But most of the coaches use non verbal communication. Many of the coaches find difficulty in communicating with players even though they are very good at knowledge. Non verbal communication plays a major role in sports coaching such as using facial expressions, eye contact, hand signals, the whistle and other body language signs. But it is also significant to use verbal communication. Non verbal communication sometimes leads to wrong interpretation. Therefore having good communication skills is an essential element of coaching in order to interact with players well and efficiently.

**Key Words:** Communication, Sports Management, Skills, Relationships.

### **SPEAKING SKILLS:**

Among the major language skills (LSRW), speaking skills are very important and it decides the coach's career in the present market. The ability to communicate in English language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the coach in every phase of life. According to Oxford Advanced Dictionary the definition of speaking is: "to express or communicate opinions, feelings, ideas, etc., by or as talking it involves the activities in the part of the speaker as psychological (articulator) and physical (acoustic) stages." Or "speaking is to make use of language in an ordinary, not singing, to state view, wishes etc. or an act of spokesman". Penny Ur (1996:120) in her definition on speaking states: "Speaking is the most important skill since people who know a language are referred as "the speaker" of a language. In addition, speaking is the ability that includes all other kinds of knowing. Thornberry (2005: 8) says that speaking is a speech production that becomes a part of our daily activities. Most of speaking activities are in the form of face-to-face dialogs; therefore speaking involves interaction.

According to *Martin Bygate's Theory on speaking* (1972:3), in order to achieve communicative goal through speaking, there are two aspects to be considered. The one is knowledge of the language and the other is the skill use in this language. It is not enough to possess the knowledge of the language, but a speaker of the language should be able to use in different situations.

*Jeremy Harmer's View on Speaking:* Harmer (2001) distinguishes two aspects, 'language features' and 'mental/social processing' with regard to elements of speaking which are



necessary for fluent and oral production. The first aspect of the language features, necessary for the oral production involves connected speech, expressive devices, lexis, and grammar. In brief the language features are given below: connected speech- conveying fluent connected speech including assimilation, elision, linking 'r', contractions and stress patterning- weakened sound; expressive devices- pitch, stress, speed, volume, physical-non-verbal means for conveying meanings (super segmental features); lexis and grammar- supplying common lexical phrases for different functions (agreeing, disagreeing, expressing shock, surprise, approval etc.); negotiation language- in order to seek clarification and to show the structure of what we are saying. (p. 269-270).

Coaches who graduates from rural areas mostly lacking speaking skills and experience very difficulty in expressing their thoughts in English and it also becomes a barrier for them to move rapidly on the corporate ladder..

The following speaking elements are useful in sports management.

- Giving instructions.
- Giving directions.
- Giving suggestions.
- Giving feedback.
- Giving an oral presentation.
- Speaking at press meetings.
- Public speech on sports day.
- Giving objections.
- Appreciating players.
- Discussion at symposiums.
- Interacting with parents of the players.
- Speaking on sports meet.

### **LISTENING SKILLS:**

Listening is one of the significant components of effective communication skills. Half of the communication is done through active listening. Coach needs to have patience to listen to the concerns of players. Coaches need active listening skills as they watch and listen to games. Brownell (1994) and Fracaro (2001), in Flynn et al (2008) state "listening is considered by some to be the single most important element in the communication process, even more highly valued than speaking as a communication skill necessary in the business world" (p.143-144). Most of the coaches are unable to follow the commentary as they have poor knowledge of pronunciation. In order to improve their pronunciation past tense and plural markers in phonetics can be taught to the coaches.

- Listening to players or colleagues.
- Listening to commentary
- Listening and comprehending a presentation.

### **READING SKILLS:**

If an individual is good in reading he or she may be good at other three skills of language i.e. listening, speaking and writing. Sports coaches read the rules and history of different games.



In order to convey this information reading skills is significant to coaches. "Where there is little reading there will be little language learning. ..the student who wants to learn English will have to read himself into a knowledge of it unless he can move into an English environment" (Bright and McGregor, 1970, p.52).

- Reading players' history.
- Reading a pamphlet.
- Reading rules and history of a game.

### **WRITING SKILLS:**

Sports coaches need writing skills also as they write circulars and notices for sports events. Coaches need to improve the following writing skills.

- Letter writing.
- Notice writing.
- Writing a circular.
- Writing an article.
- Writing anchoring script on sports day.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Sports coaches are good at subject and using non verbal communication. It is better to use verbal communication also because non verbal communication may lead to wrong interpretation in some cases. It will be effective if a coach uses both verbal and non verbal communication. Hence, it is necessary to master all four skills of language.

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