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# 101

## WAYS TO MOTIVATE ATHLETES

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# Introduction

All coaches love the self-motivated athlete. Unfortunately, relatively few athletes have the self-motivation to give maximum effort when they have the belief that only minimum effort is needed. A common lament of many coaches is that their athletes are, in fact, unmotivated, that they don't work hard enough, that they're not willing to sacrifice to achieve success. "Why aren't they motivated?" they complain. "Don't they want to win?" Furthermore, too many coaches expect that the athletes who arrive for that first practice are already motivated because they have decided to give up time after school to participate.

Clearly, it is a common mistake to take motivation for granted. Coaches need to understand what motivates athletes to participate in any sport, how athletes stay motivated, and how motivation influences athletic performance. This book offers coaches of all sports proven methods for getting and keeping athletes motivated.

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## **#1: Be Motivated Yourself**

As the coach, you will probably be the most motivated individual on the team and, therefore, should consistently exhibit the traits of a motivated person. How you act and what you say-especially what you say-should always reflect motivational signals to your athletes. In fact, tell your athletes what motivates you, then be a model of motivation at all times.

The act of motivating is in its simplest terms a means of fostering a strong belief in you and your program. You establish this belief through the sincerity of what you say and the intensity of how you say it. You can motivate some athletes simply by creating a positive image of yourself-strong, smart, decisive-and you have to work at that image, like a public relations firm does for a client corporation. In addition, when athletes see you working on the quality of your image, it will encourage them to do the following:

- Maximize their efforts in practice and games
- Be enthusiastic about their place on the squad
- Maintain persistence toward a specified goal
- Handle obstacles, failures, and criticism without quitting the team
- Be intense during competition
- Improve their physical and mental skills
- Display a positive attitude
- Be attentive and alert during practices and contests
- Express an enjoyment for practicing and competing
- Work cooperatively with teammates and coaches

The coach is truly a salesman, selling a love for the sport, dialoging about its benefits, inviting athletes to participate, and offering them rewards for that participation. You must always be meeting and challenging the personal needs each athlete brings to the sport. Indeed, coaching is motivating, and motivating kids takes work. That is why you have to be motivated. Your athletes must see that above all else.