



Arizona Sidelines

APRIL 30, 2012

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ARIZONA VOLLEYBALL COACHES

“As coaches, we are often quick to say that an athlete is not ‘coachable’ when instead, our first reaction should be to ask if we are a good enough coach.”

Coaching Self Assessment; Can You Analyze YOU??

“She’s not coachable! She never listens to what I tell her and that’s why we lost.”

Sound familiar? Unfortunately, all too familiar. Many coaches, maybe even yourself have uttered phrases like this once in a while but is it true?

USA Women’s National team assistant coach Jamie Morrison doesn’t think so. “As coaches, we are often quick to say that an athlete is not ‘coachable’ when instead, our first reaction should be to ask if we are a good enough coach.” Morrison says.

“If you aren’t getting through to an athlete on a particular skill, don’t get frustrated with the athlete. Take a step back and think about another way to reach them. If you are a horrible blocking team, don’t get upset at your athletes but find a way to work on that skill in practice this week – preferably in a 6 on 6 environment.”

It’s tough sometimes as coaches to look at ourselves but Jim Collins; the author of the book “Good to Great” says irrevocably, “Performance must be assessed first and foremost relative to the organization’s mission.” Are you as a coach prepared to look inside yourself to become a better coach?

In a tremendous paper called “Becoming a Better Coach through Reflective Practice”, Laura G. Farres talks about evaluation. “The final stage in reflective practice involves evaluation.” Farres writes. “Evaluation relates to an assessment of the meaning or value of the solution. It can be compared against some standard or criteria, or assessed based on its effectiveness within the specific situation.”

“A Constant Process”

University of Arizona Head volleyball coach David Rubio says self assessment for him is a constant process. “My assistants and I meet daily discussing team issues or other items. For me personally, I reflect on how I handled issues with individual players. It might do with their behavior or it might be how I can better inspire them to be more coachable. My assistants have the autonomy to give me feedback on how I handled a specific situation good or bad. I live by the policy of honesty is the best policy in dealing with my players and or when they are dealing with me.

Self assessment can be done at several layers of a volleyball season. Pima Community College head coach Dan Bithell explains, “I include myself and my assistant coaches and managers on the same type of self evaluation that I ask our athletes to perform.”

“This happens in three phases: First, an expansive evaluation prior to the start of a season, whether fall, spring or summer. Second, a daily assessment of effort and performance once the training and competing phase begins. And thirdly, a post season evaluation. I feel that I need to reinvent myself each year and being critical of one’s self is important to doing that effectively.” Bithell says.

“As far as metrics we will list goals and responsibilities of the coaches and assess them as needed, but mostly in the day to day stuff I try to continually ask and answer questions like: Are we doing a good job of sticking to the plan? Is there new or compelling information that warrants a change to the plan? Are the players responding properly? Are the drills, games, instructions reinforcing improvement and proper behavior? Is the intensity and competitiveness good and appropriate? Is the appropriate amount of instruction and feedback being given at correct times?”

“I am my biggest critic”

Chandler Gilbert Head Volleyball Coach Vee Hiapo says, “I am my biggest critic. That is why whenever I get criticized by another person; it does not affect me very much. My goal to be the best Coach possible is my drive to always want to learn to be better for the people that I serve.”

“I use statistics from the practice, match or tournament to evaluate my performance as a Coach.” Hiapo adds. “My self evaluation involves influences from the physical, mental, social and/or emotional performances of the athlete. I will figure out the percentage for each area and then devise a practice that can accomplish a higher percentage in the athlete's and team's overall performance. I am very technical and believe in a well rounded coach and athlete.”

Glendale Community College Head Coach Lisa Stuck thinks part of self assessment is also keeping up with the science and advances in the sport. “I subscribe to several periodicals; Coaching Management, and the USAV magazine. Also I've watched some webinars through the AVCA on various topics and coaching techniques. I've attended the AVCA Conventions. I talk to other coaches in the state about things at times to get ideas. I try to keep as current as I can.”

Phoenix College Head Coach Amanda Lieberman also uses a great deal of self evaluation. “I really try to touch base with my players about how they feel their progress is going. Since I am the teacher, if they feel they are not learning anything, then I am not doing my job. I also look what elements in the game are still not seeing improvement. I then think about how I am teaching that element and look for ways to improve from there.”

Lieberman doesn’t have a written evaluation she uses. “After each match and practice I write down a variety of things from areas that were performed well, areas for improvement, and possibly drills that were only good on paper. I am in constant evaluation of myself. After every practice, every match, I really am hard on myself to try to improve as a coach. If the team is failing, then so am I. And if the team is succeeding, then I try to identify what I am doing right. Player meetings are common and I ask and look for player feedback and understanding.”

University of South Carolina Head Coach Scott Swanson looks at himself after each practice and each match. “Did we give precise constructive feedback that the kids could understand? Did our practice have a good flow? Too much talking or standing

around, efficient shagging and water breaks? Does everyone on the team feel included and a part of practice and helping the team improve? Are we serving and passing enough? Did the team get better today? How can I help individuals better understand their role in their position on this team? What do our practice stats tell me VS what do I see on the practice video? How can I improve as a coach for the next practice? These are the questions I think I need to ask after every practice.” Swanson says.

“After a match, there are several more questions I ask of myself.” Swanson reiterates. “For example, am I as the head coach allowing the team to focus on the goals at hand or am I hindering their focus? Did I cause a distraction to my team by yelling at the officials? Did I cause a player or my team to play worse by focusing on things that need to be addressed in practice rather than in a match? Did I make this match about me and my sideline presence or was it all about my team and helping them play their best? What can we learn from match stats and video that we can work on for the next practice and learn from and improve upon for the next match? Am I calling timeouts at the right time, and are we making good use of these timeouts with sharing the correct information with the team? Should I be more willing to sub out my best player if she is struggling? Did I start in the correct rotation to give my team the best match ups and best chance to win? Can we take advantage of a better serving order to make the other team struggle with passing in their best rotations? These are the kind of tough questions that coaches need to ask of themselves and it’s not always the easiest thing to do.” Swanson admits.

“Face to face”

One of the hardest tools of coaching self assessment in the face to face interview with an athlete. One athlete recently spoke of her team’s bad day at a National Qualifier. The coach pulled them all aside and began asking each of them what he could do differently. “Every time we offered up a suggestion, he shot us down with his excuses and reasons for doing what he did, even losing his temper at times. After a while, no one said anything. It was pointless.”

Loyola Marymount Head coach Tom Black says, “I think the most important element to getting the feedback you need to improve is having a culture where people are free to talk openly and disagree with you, obviously with respect. If this doesn’t exist no feedback tool is going to be useful.”

“I do a fairly detailed statistical evaluation at the end of each season and compare it with previous seasons as well as a cumulative from the rest of the conference.” Black says and alludes to his point of an open air culture, “I hold end of the year meetings with players and staff and try to put it all together into a picture of what went right and where we need to get better.”



Shelly Aaland, Head Coach at Ft. Lewis College in Colorado says, “Every senior is given the opportunity to informally tell us in their end of season meeting what went right and wrong in their opinion. Because they don’t really have anything to lose, some seniors will let you know what is on their minds. I think this is important for their closure process, and from time to time, they say things that are right on.”

Aaland also shares an athletic department survey that was sent to all exiting seniors that she felt was an excellent self assessment tool.

<http://www.surveymoz.com/s3/543033/FLC-Student-Athlete-Exit-Survey>

“As coaches, my assistant and I have a very true and real conversation about what we feel we did right and wrong.” Aaland states. “I have found this to be the best gauge for me as a head coach. During the season, you stick with what you started with. At the end, you have the opportunity to assess if it worked or did not work. It helps us as coaches to direct our efforts and expectations for the next season and for us our spring season as well.”

South Mountain Community College Coach Patrick Mooney also uses a person to person interview as one of his biggest self assessment tools. “In the middle and at the end of the season each player has a personal meeting with me in which a written evaluation of the present or recently completed season is discussed. From those I gain immeasurable insight on how each player was feeling throughout the season as well as things to keep, adjust, or throw out for the remainder of or the next season.”

“What can you do”

Former Canadian Women’s National Team coach Vic Lindal asks every coach, what are you doing to get better? “Yes, you read books and attend symposiums but can you imagine if that’s all your players did to get better? Your players have a coach that evaluates and gives direction to get better. Now the question is what can you do?”

Some of Lindal’s ideas are outside the box. He tells a story about a top Canadian swim coach used to have parents randomly video his practices in the pool. “The swim coach was asked if he ever took a phone call in practice and would say no! But there he was on video taking a call.”

Morrison echoes Lindal’s idea of filming coaches. “I was teaching with Cecile Renaud a few weeks ago at a CAP clinic and she brought up a great idea. We often get video of our athletes to give them feedback after a match.”

Morrison says try pointing the camera in your direction while you are coaching and look for some of these things:

- Non-verbal communication – watch to see if you are rolling your eyes, putting your hands over your face, dropping your head. This will help you be self-aware at all times and make sure you are sending the right message to your team.
- Timeouts – are they as efficient as they can be.
- Are you being effective – are your actions on the sideline helping your team or hindering them?
- Are you making it about you? I see too many club coaches that make their team about them. Coaching is about putting the team and your athletes ahead of your agenda. Make sure you aren’t acting out because your team isn’t performing that day but doing everything you can to right the ship and get them going in the right direction.

While video is an excellent tool, Lindal points out that audio can be just as effective. “When I was working with one coach I indicated that she needed to be more positive in time outs and between games. I put a wireless mic on her and recorded time outs and between games. When we met I put the tape recorder on the table and played it. That is all it took.”

“A master coach”

Lindal points to another self assessment tool. “In the book ‘The Talent Code’ author Daniel Coyle says a Master coach is essential as is deep practice so get yourself a master coach.”

“When I coached the national team and my club team I would have Ray Lepp attend my practices in order to give me feedback. I remember Ray being very harsh as we went for a beverage after.”

“Another trick I used was to invite a guest coach to drill my team; This was always interesting because I could see a different set of expectations.” Lindal observed. “After I watched I would then do what I could to replicate the intensity and expectations.”

With the club season winding down and the collegiate spring training ending, are you as a coach comfortable asking your players AND even perhaps parents and peers to evaluate you as a coach?

No one likes criticism, just ask your players, but we expect them to take in what a coach has to say and use it to improve. Should coaches be held to any less of a standard?

For some self assessment tools, contact outreach@azregionvolleyball.org.

Looking Into A Mirror

By Bill Neville

I find it interesting that we never see ourselves. We only see reflections of ourselves. However, each person we encounter sees us: Every move we make; our body language; and facial expressions. Further, they interpret what they see: anger; joy; indifference; arrogance; fear; insecurity; enthusiasm; etc. Think about it: we really only get to see snippets of ourselves. Often we don't like what we see so we look away. At other times we like what we see. All that to say this:
Coaches are among the most closely scrutinized and judged people in our



society. Every nuance is observed, judged, and evaluated based on how it affects them individually. Each expression, voice, or move you make is taken personally by each of your players.

It's kind of scary when you think too much about it. If we are to be successful coaches we need to constantly evaluate how we affect our charges. Here are some examples:

- Back in 1974 when I was the head coach of the Canadian Olympic Team I experienced a teachable moment that has impacted me to this day. We had just finished the North American –Caribbean Zone Championships. I believed we had a terrific run up of training prior to the tournament. We got crushed. I held a team meeting after the tournament. I started my remarks by saying, "If I had to select the Olympic Team right now there would be 4 or 5 of you who would make it." Years later talking with several of the guys, reminiscing about the good old' days, they told me how they responded to my opening comment. Most of them were ticking off the 4 or 5 guys they thought would make it and started thinking, "I'm not one of them!" They never heard the rest of my message. Of course, I had no list of who was or wasn't going to make it. I was simply trying to make a point of the work we had to do to get ready. No one really heard it.
- Later I was working with one of my middle blockers. We were working on situational move. He wasn't getting it despite my best efforts. I made a facial expression that indicated my frustration – not with him but for my inability to get my lesson across. He noticed my expression and said sarcastically, "Oh that's real positive coaching." That comment, in turn, fired me up and we had it out which, actually, turned out great. But it is an example if the continual affect we have as coaches.
- Many years later while coaching the women at the University of Washington I again was reminded that players never miss a thing. Early the morning of a match I was dressing. Trying not to disturb my wife I kept the light off. I put on a black sock and a dark, navy blue one. I couldn't tell the difference in the sunlight. At the match that evening the team captain informed my assistant of my mismatched socks. Who looks at socks? The women never seem to look but they always see.

I can recall many times over the years how my general countenance and voice inflections have influenced my teams either in a small way or with significance. I have come to some conclusions:

1. The closer a coach can get to looking in the mirror and seeing the

person others see the more effective he or she can coach.

2. Having a trusted staff who can honestly evaluate how the team and individual players respond to the head coach's communication is critical. This is, of course, reciprocal. To wit: At Washington I had one of my assistants constantly monitor my body language. When in a competitive game I will lean forward, furrow my brow in concentration and wince at a missed play, among other subtle and not-so-subtle reactions to the game. Therefore, my assistant will assess the impact. If he thought it was being misinterpreted out on the court, he would simply say, "Body Language".
3. Have a trusted professional colleague come and observe practice and evaluate your interactions with your team. Doug Beal and I would do this by video taped coaching. It was hard to watch sometimes but very instructional.
4. Keep a journal. Note events involving the players and how you reacted. Identify situations that concern you the most; write how you responded; and what you could do to be better.
5. Actually do a "Look into the Mirror and who do you see?" exercise. Could be with your whole team or staff. Write down 10 descriptive words that you see in yourself. Everyone else writes down 10 descriptive words about you. Match them up. The exercise could lead to a great discussion or you could collect them for your own private assessment. I prefer the group discussion.

In summary the better a coach knows him or herself the more effective a leader and communicator the coach will be. It is an ongoing evaluative process.

Bill Neville is a Three Time Men's Olympic Coach, Gold Medalist in 1984, University of Washington Women's Head Coach 1991-2000, and is currently National Commissioner of Coaching Education for USAV as well as CEO for Nevillizms Volleyball Coaching.

Region's 2nd Annual Coaching Academy June 3rd

The Arizona Region is hosting the 2nd Annual Coaching Academy. This year the event will be held on just one day, June 3rd at the Court One facility in Tempe. Session I will be from 9:00 a.m. till Noon and session II from 1:00 p.m. till 4:00.

Speakers include:

- Pima Community College Coach Dan Bithell

- South Mountain Community College Coach Patrick Mooney
- Glendale Community College Coach Lisa Stuck
- ASU Head Coach Jason Watson
- ASU Assistant Head Coach Linda Hampton-Keith
- Grand Canyon Men's Head Coach Jeremy Price

Cost for this clinic is \$75 if registered before May 31st and is \$100 for late registrants and walk ups. A free polo shirt will be given to all those pre registered only.

The Coaching Academy can be used as an IMPACT recertification in the Arizona Region only.

For more information, contact outreach@azregionvolleybal.org

Resources for the Coach

One of the great blogs on mindset and success is called the Talent Code and can be seen at <http://thetalentcode.com/> Talent Code author Daniel Coyle dives into many subjects relevant to coaching and the peripherals that come with it.

Many of the top coaches in the country write for the Gold Medal Squared blog which can be found at <http://goldmedalsquared.com/blog/category/archived-articles/> The articles cover many facets of skills, training and coaching.

If you want to stay in touch with the collegiate game, check out Off the Block at <http://www.offtheblockblog.com/> This blog helps break down the college game for BOTH men's and women's volleyball.

“Nobody wins without good athletes and good volleyball players and that is the bottom line.”



Chris McGee on What it Takes to Win Open Gold

Chris McGee is the Co-Director of the Sports Shack Volleyball Club and will be entering his 17th year with the club. Chris was the Assistant coach to the Sports Shack 18-Asics team that won Gold Medals at the Junior Nationals in the Open division in 2010 and 2011. He also is a reporter for Fox Sports news in

Southern California, a host on the popular volleyball podcast, “The Net Live” and continues to work and announce beach events across the country.

1. Give me a formula for winning at the 18 Open level? What percent is luck, what percent athletes? What percent coaching/training, etc. And why do you think they are the percentages they are?

In winning the 18s Open Championship its tough to put it into percentages but you need this combination things:

Athletes, chemistry, training and luck.

First, nobody wins without good athletes and good volleyball players and that is the bottom line. You don't have to be the biggest and strongest but to win you have to have be physical, especially at the pins.... physical attacking and blocking were huge for us the last 2 years

Chemistry matters, you have to be on the same page, engaged in the same journey because during a long season you will get tested, you will lose, you will face adversity and how you handle that as a team will be crucial when put into pressure situations during Junior Olympics. I always tell teams you don't have to all be best friends because that is unrealistic but there has to be trust and respect. When a group truly becomes a team and cares more about the one common goal more than the individual accomplishments it is an amazing sight to see and be a part of. Never ever underrate the power of team chemistry

Training is key. You can have all the talent in the world but if they are not trained, then you are not winning anything. I think there are many systems that work, so I know that ours is not the only one but it's more about getting better and improving as the year goes on. Nobody wins a club title in January, so tailor your training according

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to your season and peak late. Serving and passing, which is volleyball 101, is something we work on everyday. If you win the serving and passing game then you will win a lot of matches

Luck is something you have to have; staying healthy, ball bouncing your way, refs not getting in the way, a kid on the line not paying attention. All that stuff is what we coaches call "luck" or "unlucky" depending on how all the ball bounces. Now we always tell our teams if you prepare and work the right way then you will have more opportunities to be lucky and I believe that

2. What do you/Sports Shack do that other clubs don't/won't to make you guys so successful?

It would not be fair for me to say what other clubs do or don't do. I have a lot of friends out there that do a great job and run awesome clubs and they are very successful. I just know that for us, we promote what we do, our coaches, and we have been fortunate that for the last 20 years our teams have been very successful. Many of our kids go on to college to play volleyball and are great students and that means success to us. I think that most, not all of course because that is impossible, of the kids that make it through our program have a great time, have fun, enjoy playing volleyball, and they improve.

3. What is your coaching philosophy and your training philosophy toward these higher level players and is it different for younger level teams you might coach, when say your 3 year old daughter Millie gets to playing age?

We, and I mean Tim Jensen, who is the club director and a coach at Pepperdine, we have coached together for 17 years. We demand a lot from our girls in terms of commitment on and off the floor! We believe in the team concept and everyone having a role. To be on our team, individual glory and accolades are not what we strive for.

First and Foremost we want to "get better" and secondly we want to win. We believe its a process, a journey, and along the way you have a lot of fun and hopefully you can take what you learned from playing with us and use it in all aspects of your life

We break up the season into parts

The first part is trying to qualify for Division 1 in So Cal. This happens in early February and at this point you are trying to figure out what you have got in terms of talent and implementing our system. By Vegas in late February we leave that tournament and make a list of what we are great at and what we need to improve on. For the next month we train hard on those things and our goal is to qualify for JO's before April. If that happens, we then have 2 and half months to put our 2nd part of our system in which is change and tweak things accordingly and make a push for JO's. We want to peak in June.

We train out of system a lot, always working on that, defense and passing everyday

and serving is key as well

We believe in breaks as well, we always take 10-12 days off in April, keep them fresh, and get them away from Volley.

Key for us training is our practices our built to be fast and hard. One hour of drills and 1 hour of 6 on 6, not scrimmages, we rarely do that; mostly wash drills and situational stuff.

I will tell you this, in 2010 when we won the Gold medal, we used a lineup the last 6 matches that we had never used all year. We had a feeling and went with a substitution pattern and it worked. You CAN'T be afraid of adjusting or changing on the fly or in pressure situations; believe in abilities and make it happen.

And yes it's different for younger kids at the early ages; teach skills, serving and passing are key and allow them to enjoy the game and not burn them out.

4. What are the biggest changes you have seen in club in say the last 10 years and how have they changed the way you coach and train, or have they?

As for clubs, they have changed because it's very cut throat now. There are so many clubs and the season never really ends. It's so competitive that you have to stay on top of everything. If kids come to our off-season camps or clinics then you have to sell what you have to offer! Parents and kids these days all want to start on a #1 team. It's a bummer. It's not like it used to be

Our training and philosophy changes sometimes. Our core beliefs stay intact but system and ideas change because we are always trying something new

5. What advice can you give younger coaches that want to get to your level?

My advice? I say coach camps, clinics, and learn from coaches, and apply that to your own beliefs. Don't be afraid to call a college coach and go sit in on practices. You can never stop learning the game. Communication is key, with players, with parents, with other coaches on your staff! A young coach should always be coaching as much as possible, you learn how to win, how to lose, how to face adversity and get thru it. If it was easy, everyone would do it

Coaching gets in your blood and you get hooked. The best feeling is watching a team come together and go thru the tough times and come out on top in the end; its beauty!

We have won 2 gold's in a row at the 18 open level and have won festival in 05, I have won 2 boys JO's gold's as well and I will tell you this; they were all different and all special, and all amazing. I've lost before when I was supposed to win, and won when I was not supposed to, that's sports and that's life!

Coaching Tools- Bringing in the Tech

As the sport of volleyball becomes increasingly popular, so must the technological advances that are being used by professional and college teams throughout their season.

While there are several programs that despite being expensive help college and professional programs scout opponents and train athletes using video, these days there are several programs that are both affordable and easy to use.

Most of these programs are inexpensive or free and are easy to use and learn.

We would love YOUR feedback and what you use and why for future coaching newsletters. Please e-mail us your reviews at outreach@azregionvolleyball.org.

For a couple of the newer tools, see below...

“Team Volleyball Stats”

Ryan Kral, a mobile application developer out of Arizona, currently has an app available on the Android Market entitled “Team Volleyball Stats”. The app allows coaches and parents to keep track of a wide range of statistics on their Android devices which can later be accessed for viewing, exported in an Excel file, or exported for direct compatibility with MaxPreps.com.

“Team Volleyball Stats” is currently the top volleyball statistics application on the Android Market with approximately 700 installations and has an average rating of 4.5 out of 5 stars.

Ryan is a former volleyball player from the 2010 State Championship Team at Deer Valley High School and also played club ball for two years. He hopes that through his app he can further promote the game of volleyball within the Arizona community.

“Team Volleyball Stats” can be found directly from your mobile Android devices by searching the app name or online at:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.dvballa21.volleyballstatsteam>

Another version, “Individual Volleyball Stats”, is available for a free download.

Ryan’s development company, Arrowshark, has the following contact information:

Email: arrowsharkprods@gmail.com

Website: <http://arrowsharkprods.weebly.com/>

“SoloStats 1-2-3”

I want to let you know about a new App - SoloStats123.

It's the first stat app that lets you coach and stat at the same time. I coach alone a lot and have never been able to use other stat apps and still be able to keep track of the game and support my team. Because of this, I built a prototype to track "Exit Stats" or "End of Rally Stats" -- this is the last action that ended the rally.

For example, Megan made a Kill. I capture this data at the end of the rally and before the beginning of the next rally. This has allowed me to watch the game and keep stats at the same time. I've been using and testing this prototype for almost 2 years.

Now we have a "real" version that my partner, Prescott, wrote that is available for the iPad. While entering just the end of rally stat may not seem like much information, the results are pretty amazing. You get all kinds of good stuff like Side Out % and Point Scoring % by Rotation; who is scoring points for your team and who is losing points; Rotation by Player stats that tell you "why" a rotation is doing well or poorly.

You can get the app from the Apple App Store. It is available FREE for 30 days. SoloStats also backs up your data to our Rotate123.com website for safekeeping. We also provide an additional service called WebReports so you view consolidated reports and trends from your SoloStats data across multiple games and matches. SoloStats is recommended by the AVCA, the JVA and the Art of Coaching Volleyball. Click here to see the app and the reports in more detail:

http://www.rotate123.com/home?utm_campaign=solostats-launch&utm_medium=email&utm_source=r123_3.14.12#chap8

BTW, if you shoot game videos, in a few days we will start beta testing our new Video Indexer. This service will allow you to click on SoloStats actions and see the video that corresponds to it.

If you are interested in helping us, let me know. Use the email below.

If you have any questions, contact me at kyle@rotate123.com

Kyle Mashima

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