

Coach's approach in
the movie, remember
the titans



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This essay will seek to describe coaching terminology, principles and concepts, and explore the effectiveness of the styles and qualities displayed by the two; o main coaches in the movie Remember the Titans (2000). It will essentially examine the truth in Martens (2012) comment: ' Your success as a coach will depend more on your coaching philosophy than on any other factor" (p. L).

In the film Remember the Titans, one black and one white school are forced to integrate. A colored coach (Coach Herman Boone) from out of town Is made head coach over the combined team of liturgical players.

In this monumental battle against egos, politics and discrimination, the role of Coach Boone becomes more than just head football coach. Coaching Philosophy A coaching philosophy is basically the principles that guide and define a coach's method.

It Is the reason they coach the way they do (Seaside, Jones, & Popular, 2004). It can be better understood as consisting of two components: The major objectives (what it is you want to achieve), and the principles that guide your decision making and path to success (Martens, 2012).

Philosophies can however mould and evolve ever time as acting according to principles results in success or failure (Martens, 2012). Repeated failure would likely see a re-evaluation of those principles and multiple successes would confirm the philosophy Is on the right track.

A coaching philosophy is the cornerstone of a successful coach. It provides direction and clarifies motives which also prevents coaching decisions

becoming too situation specific and Impulsive (Seaside, Jones, & Popular, 2004). It also 'sets the standard' for athletes so that they know what is expected of them, thus reducing uncertainty and improving team cohesion.

I believe Coach Bone's coaching philosophy revolves around the idea that a coach should have the unconditional respect and obedience of his players. His 'objective' is perfectionism and he hopes to achieve that through discipline and by drilling his players.

His goal of perfection is clearly demonstrated when he tells his players "We will be perfect in every aspect of the game" (Brushier, 2000). He has his players doing relentless fitness work and repetitive drills in the belief that it will result in an error free successful team.

Coach Bill Yeast's coaching philosophy is less obvious in the movie as he is only assistant coach and plays a less prominent role in the movie. It is

However, clear from what we do see that he is a coach who believes in looking after his players. He understands that players react differently to being yelled at and criticized and that it may not be at all beneficial to treat everyone the same. His 'objective' seems to be the welfare of his players so as to bring out the best in them. His concern for his players is first evident when he says to Coach Boone "This isn't about me, I'm worried about my boys" (Brushier, 2000).

He is also reluctant to coaching philosophies of both coaches in this film are clearly quite different, and finding a balance between the two was a major task for the characters involved. The Coaches Roles and Responsibilities The

roles and responsibilities of a coach can vary depending on the coach and the athlete. The coach of a team of five year old soccer players will have different roles and responsibilities to those of an elite cyclist's coach. There are however some which overlap and can be important in any coaching situation.

Some broad roles of a coach include player development, relationship building, strategist, manager and coacher (McConnell, 2000).

Also, coaches have a responsibility to act in ways that will set a social and moral example for their athletes, particularly at youth level (Cones, Wells, Peters, & Johnson, 1993). Essentially a coach must be able to play various roles for each individual athlete in order to better that athlete in more ways than just athletically. One of the roles Coach Boone has and exceeds at is the role of relationship builder.

A key aspect of this role is that while athletes do not have to agree with you, they must respect you and feel as though you are fair and impartial (McConnell, 2000). Coach Boone displays this quality multiple times, whether it be by telling Coach Yeast, " Now I may be a mean cuss, but I'm the same mean cuss with everybody out there on that football field" (Brushier, 2000), or by saying, " The best player will play, color won't matter" (Brushier, 2000).

This impartiality is key in building the relationship between himself and his players and in gaining their respect.

Another example of Coach Boone building relationships is between the teammates themselves, a seemingly impossible task given the situation. He makes it clear that race will not be boundary within the team when he separates offensive and defensive player and makes them ride a bus together, meaning each bus would have a mixture of races. He also forces each player to get to know every one of his teammates, breaking the racial boundary between players further.

The success of the team largely depended on the success of Coach Boone succeeding at the role of relationship builder.

The responsibility Coach Yeast is most concerned with is player welfare, both psychological and physical. This is especially evident when he questions Coach Bone's decision to take the team for a run at Bam stating, " Coach, this is a high school football team. We're not in the marines here" (Brushier, 2000). On a separate occasion where Coach Boone is pushing the team during a fitness exercise, Coach Yeast says, " There's a fine line between tough and crazy and you're flirting with it" (Brushier, 2000).

When Coach Yeast thinks the players' health may be in jeopardy, he feels the need to step in and protect them.

These and many other instances in the film illustrate that Coach Yeast takes his responsibility for the team's wellbeing seriously. Effective Coaching Qualities According to McConnell (2000), some of the key qualities an effective coach must knowledge of skills and techniques, and taking pride in his players' achievements. To be an effective communicator, one must first appear credible, and also have a positive approach and be consistent. It is <https://assignbuster.com/coachs-approach-in-the-movie-remember-the-titans/>

also important to listen and provide nonverbal messages (Cones, Wells, Peters, & Johnson, 1993).

Having the players' respect is one of the most important assets a coach can possess. It increases the likelihood players will take their coach seriously and improves the overall 'Vibe' within the team. Enthusiasm is another important quality a coach needs to possess. Enthusiasm is an attractive attribute as it shows "intense and eager enjoyment" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2010) and will encourage athlete participation, effort and enjoyment.

It goes without saying that coaches need to have a high level of knowledge when it comes to skills and techniques.

As they are the athletes' source of knowledge and are expected to educate players, it is important that what they are telling their athletes is relevant and correct. It is however worth noting that, in general, athletes view their coach's personal qualities as being more important than their knowledge (McConnell, 2000). Lastly, a coach must be able to take pride in his players' achievements. I believe the pride of achievement displayed by a coach gives the athletes a great sense of accomplishment. They know that they have either met or exceeded their coach's expectations of them.

One of the key qualities I feel Coach Boone deserves credit for is his communication skills. His volume, tone and what he says throughout the film are consistent with his coaching philosophy and are appropriate. When the team is trying to get themselves 'in the zone' and hyped up, he joins in the antics by saying, "What are you? What is pain? What is fatigue?" (Brushier, 2000), in a loud commanding voice. He is also able to change tone when he <https://assignbuster.com/coachs-approach-in-the-movie-remember-the-titans/>

takes the team to the graveyard at Gettysburg where a race war was fought and gives a short speech to try and unite the players.

He gives this speech in such a way that it affects the players emotionally, as intended.

Another quality I feel enabled Coach Boone to coach more effectively was the way he gained the respect of all of the players. He did this by treating all players equally, disciplining and rewarding them in the same ways. This made it clear to the players that no one was favorite, but also that their coach had an equal respect for every player. Coach Yeast clearly had the knowledge to be a great coach. He had a very successful coaching career and was almost inducted into the Virginia High School hall of fame.

This knowledge not only made him an asset to the players, but also to Coach Boone, the head coach. His experience and knowledge enabled the Titan's defensive team to excel. One other quality Coach Yeast possessed was his enthusiasm and willingness to encourage players individually. An instance where he shows this characteristic is when he tells Blue to " Get back in there! You know what I'm talking about.

You can't be afraid of him! " (Brushier, 2000). The enthusiasm he shows his players, even after losing the job of head coach is an example to all the players.

It incites similar qualities in those players who are also in undesirable circumstances. One way coaching styles have been categorized is in an autocratic, democratic, laissez faire tracheotomy. In simpler terms coaching

styles can be considered either authoritarian, cooperative or casual Joseph P. Kennedy Jar Foundation, n.

D.). The authoritarian coach may also be called the dictator coach. As his name suggests, this coach makes all the decisions, tells his players what to do, and expects the players to o strictly as they are told (McConnell, 2000). He rarely, if ever, considers the individual needs of his players.

The cooperative coach, also known as the democratic coach, values the input of his players and allows consultation and sharing of ideas (McConnell, 2000). Here decision making is shared and the coach acts more as a guide than a boss. The casual coach has no real concern for developing his athletes. He delegates decision making to the team as he has no desire to make them himself and is usually very easy going (McConnell, 2000). Coach Boone is quite clearly an authoritarian coach.

He even goes so far as to say “ This is no democracy. It is a dictatorship. I am the law’ (Brushier, 2000).

He makes a mockery of Gary before heading to camp in order to illustrate his authority. Choosing to call out to everyone before doing so meant his stamp of authority was witnessed and understood by the entire team. While this style of coaching may be optimal in some circumstances, it is generally undesirable as it allows for little consideration of individual players' views and feelings (McConnell, 2000).

Coach Yeast has a more cooperative style of coaching. His interests include the wellbeing of the players. He allows his players to have an input but still has the final say.

One instance where it is clear that he cares about his players is when he suggests to Coach Boone that he incorporate some trick plays. He believes this will spark their imagination and enable them to enjoy themselves more.

A democratic (cooperative) style leader such as Coach Yeast encourages athletes to play a role in the decision making process and accept some responsibility for themselves (McConnell, 2000). Team Cohesion and the Positive Coaching Environment The coaching environment is an important factor when it comes to the success of a coach and their team.

In a positive environment, athletes will enjoy themselves, express themselves and be motivated to perform. Team cohesion is essentially a team sticking together, as one, to achieve the team's (and possibly each members) goals (Weinberg & Gould, 2011). Team cohesion major influences the environment in which you coach and this environment plays a major role in a coach's success or failure (McConnell, 2000). It is important to maximize team cohesion because it gives everyone a sense of responsibility for one another which motivates athletes to be their best.

Also, the more familiar players are with each other, the more likely they are to work as a team. Another thing to consider when trying to create a positive coaching environment is whether or not punishment is necessary. Often, if an athlete fears unavoidable their coach's retaliation, they will usually

perform at a more optimal level (Taylor, n. D.). Furthermore, certain types of
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athletes are negatively affected by a fear of failure, so would not benefit from a highly critical coach (Weinberg & Gould, 2011).

Evidently, persistent punishment may not benefit a coaching environment so should only be used in exceptional circumstances. In *Remember the Titans*, Coach Boone is phenomenal at growing team cohesion. He faces a difficult task in trying to get a group of white students to bond with their black teammates. As mentioned earlier, he forces offensive and defensive teams to sit on separate buses, knowing this would mean a mixture of races on each bus. He later tells his players, " Each one of you will spend time every day with a teammate of a different race.

You will learn about him and his family, his likes, his dislikes" (Brushier, 2000). This forced interaction is just one of the many ways he breaks down the barriers between his players and builds team cohesion. While Coach Boone was successful at building team cohesion, I do question the environment his team were trained in. As Coach Boone was forceful and critical of his players during trainings, I feel he was somewhat lucky to have the success he did. One scenario where this could have backfired was when he yelled at Petty and told him to run every foot in a mile for fumbling the ball.

This kind of pressure and discipline could (and eventually did) have a detrimental effect on a player's motivation.

The environment he created was not ideal but luckily, it was in contrast to, and balanced by Coach Yeast's coaching environment. The coaching environment Coach Yeast created was quite a relaxed uncritical setting.
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Originally Coach Yeast refused to work under Coach Boone, but in electing to take up the role as assistant coach, he gave the white players an incentive to stay in the team.

His professional relationship with Coach Boone would have shown the team that they could work together and be a part of the same team despite their differences, allowing for a more positive environment and better team cohesion. Another example of Coach Yeast encouraging team cohesion was by being impartial when he took the white defensive player Alan off and put Petty, a black offensive player, on.

He did this spite Élan's father yelling, mimosa, don't you take out my son" (Brushier, 2000), emphasizing his commitment to showing his players race is not a barrier thus improving the team's cohesion.