

athletic coach

EDUCATION

Volume 2, Issue 2	<h3>What's New?</h3> <p>Brad Stoffers, Ed.M, CSCS</p> <p>Welcome to Athletic Coach Education's February Newsletter, the monthly newsletter for our innovative website promoting coach education and professional development for sport coaches at all levels.</p> <p>If you are familiar with our site you know that we offer a free membership for any interested coach that gives you access to coaching articles, videos, and resources, a discussion board, coaching blog, and a profile in our network of coaches!</p> <p>The website is expanding everyday with much more to come and if you have not joined us, we would love to have your knowledge and experience a part of what we do to help coaches like yourself everyday! If you are already a member enjoying all of these benefits we would like to thank you for your support!</p> <p>To visit the site, become a member, and learn more about how to become a better coach, go to www.AthleticCoachEducation.com! If you have any questions about the site or how it can become a better resource for you please let us know.</p> <p>Thank you for your support and for reading our February newsletter!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Brad Stoffers, Ed.M, CSCS brad@AthleticCoachEducation.com www.AthleticCoachEducation.com</p>
February 17, 2011	
<p>“Good is the enemy of great, because what you are doing well you could be doing better than anyone else in the World”</p>	
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Resource Review: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

Brad Stoffers, Ed.M, CSCS

One of the best coaching books I have read is The Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Peter Lencioni. The book highlights a business story, but all of it's contents relate to coaching teams. Lencioni develops 5 reasons teams may not reach their full potential and they are:

1.) **Absence of Trust**- This dysfunction is the first building block in creating a successful team because without trust there is no team environment and atmosphere. Build Trust through team building exercises.

2.) **Fear of Conflict**- This dysfunction comes from a need to maintain an *artificial harmony* among team members. Stemming from the first dysfunction of absence of trust, there is fear of conflict because people in general do not want to cause controversy. However, without some conflict nothing is accomplished.

3.) **Lack of Commitment**- In the middle of the pyramid is Lack of Commitment, which is a result from *ambiguity* of goals and a team mission. Be specific with what you would like to achieve and go after it; commit to it and make sure every team member is on board with it as well!

4.) **Avoidance of Accountability**- Nearing the top of the pyramid, this dysfunction is a result of a team having set *low standards* or no clear standards in at all. Use goal setting as your GPS to the top.

5.) **Inattention to Results**- At the top of the pyramid (as is almost always the case) is results! You will not be successful without attention to your results and how you are doing as a group! Analyze the team's strengths and weaknesses and adjust accordingly. This can be done effectively through debriefing with the team by way of journal, discussion, video feedback, etc.



Do More Hands Make Easier Work?

Brad Stoffers, Ed.M, CSCS

The old saying "many hands make light the work" is a magnificent motivational tool for coaches of team sports. This idea that more people will achieve greater working collectively than any one individual alone is very powerful for promoting group collaboration and in athletics this premise is the basis behind all team sports. Of course there are many reasons for sport participation, but I think the goal of many athletes in team sport settings is to achieve this special something whatever it may be with a group of like minded individuals.

However, as all coaches know from experience, teams of individuals working together do not always achieve as much as expected. This phenomenon was studied years ago by a German psychologist named Ringelmann, and although his work was never published, it has been cited by many who came after him. What Ringelmann designed was an experiment measuring the force with which an individual could pull a tug of war rope alone, in pairs, and groups of various numbers.

What he hypothesized was exactly what team sport coaches hypothesize at the beginning of each season- the force being pulled on the rope (or the outcome of the season) would be the sum of each individual's own strength added together based on the number of people pulling on the rope. For example, if one person could pull the rope with 30 N of force, then 3 of those people would be able to collectively pull 90 N of force.

$$30\text{N Force each person} \times 3 \text{ People} = 90 \text{ N of total force pulling}$$

In team sports, coaches look at their rosters at the beginning of the season and evaluate each individual athlete's ability and often come up with an outlook for the season based on what each individual is capable of. Like Ringelmann, this is the most logical and rationale way of coming up with a sum. However, the results of Ringelmann's study were far from his hypothesis and his



Athletic teams every day are facing daunting tasks where success depends on the complete effort of everyone involved, but is this happening?

Research in social loafing suggests that the more team members involved results in decreased effort by each individual.

findings were the beginning of research delving into a phenomenon now known as social loafing.

When individual's pulled the rope alone they pulled with an average force of 63 kg compared to pulling in a group of three which exerted a force of 160 kg, only 2.5X the average individual force. In fact, as more people were added to the rope the group continually pulled with less force relative to the sum of their individual forces. Pairs pulled at 93% of their collective sum, trios at 85%, and groups of eight at only 49% of their collective sum!

Social loafing has since been observed in many group settings and is important also for coaches in team sport settings because as we know from Ringelmann as the number of individuals involved in a certain task increases, the specific execution of the task by each individual decreases, ultimately causing the team as a whole to underachieve.

What I take most from this research is that every team member needs to understand and believe in their role on the team. To accomplish this I see it very important to talk with athletes on the team about their specific role and how they can become successful within that role. Show them how their individual contribution makes the team successful and emphasize the importance of that role. These lessons of learning and accepting roles within a team will help them stay motivated to pull their hardest on the rope to accomplish the team goals.

As mentioned, success can be reached at much higher levels in teams, but will only be achieved through synergy with each other. Make team success a reality and keep everyone motivated to pull their hardest on the rope as it they were pulling alone. This collaborative effort will be greater and the team will achieve at their highest.

Levine, John & Moreland, Richard. (2006). Key Readings in Social Psychology: Small Groups. Psychology Press. New York, NY.

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February's Featured Member: Tariq Mohammed

This month I'm proud to present Tariq Mohammed as our featured member of the month!

Mohammed is currently in his fourth year as the Head Boys and Girls Squash Coach at Concord Academy (MA) and his eighth total year of coaching as a certified squash coach which includes years teaching a broad spectrum of players in various capacities including private lessons, squash clinics and camps, and collegiate experience as an Associate Coach at Tufts University and Coaching Assistant at Harvard University. In addition to his coaching, Mohammed also teaches a beginning squash class in the P.E. Department at Concord.

At the grassroots level, Tariq was a founding member of Kidsquash, a 501c3, nonprofit, community-based squash program that encourages wellbeing through sport. He is also a founding member of Khelshala, a registered charity in India that combines squash, tutoring, yoga and music to benefit

underprivileged children.

An American citizen, Tariq was born in the United Arab Emirates and schooled in the United Kingdom, India and Saudi Arabia. Earlier in his career Tariq worked as a researcher at the Center for International Development at Harvard University. During 2003-2004, he served as a United Nations Volunteer in Uganda based at Makerere University where he co-established an educational program to enable disadvantaged youth, reestablishing his passion for promoting development through education.

Mohammed also continues to educate himself, most recently earning his Masters degree in Education with a specialization in coaching at Boston University in 2010. Thank you for all your contributions in coaching and congratulations on becoming our featured member!



Featured Member Tariq Mohammed