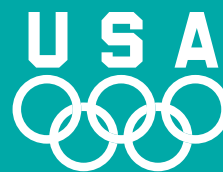


MIND GAMES

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

60 SECOND SUMMARY

HOT OFF THE PRESS



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Message from the
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Win Now or Win Consistently

STAFF MANAGEMENT AND MENTORING:
Delegate Responsibility and Offer Opportunities for Development

**THOUGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR
TEAM-SPORT PEAKING**

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OLYMPIC COACH is a publication of the United States Olympic Committee Coaching Division. Readers are encouraged to submit items of interest for possible inclusion. Submitted materials will be acknowledged but cannot be returned, and inclusion cannot be guaranteed. Materials should be sent to Catherine Sellers at the address listed under Publisher.

PUBLISHER

United States Olympic Committee
Coaching Department
1 Olympic Plaza
Colorado Springs, CO. 80909-5760
Telephone: 719.866.3236 or 866.4852

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ON THE COVER

Team USA Synchronized Swimming Team Routine—8/27/2004.
Photo by Daniel Berehulak/Getty Images

Message from the
**PERFORMANCE
SERVICES MANAGING
DIRECTOR**
by
DOUG INGRAM

The year was 1988 and USA Swimming had just experienced a team performance that was not at an acceptable level for them. In fact, this had been brewing since 1976 when the East German women began to dominate in swimming and the USA had slipped to third in the overall country medal count behind the Soviet Union and East Germany.

The officials at USA Swimming were determined to correct the situation. They studied every aspect of their preparation, performance and team. The area that they attacked first was team. The challenge was, how do you make a group of individuals come together with the strength of a team? If you are an avid watcher of the Games and swimming, you will know that the efforts that started in 1988 to coalesce as a team and the resultant success is still apparent today. There is a lot to this shared commitment between athletes, coaches and administrators. A very visible example is the fact that all USA Swimmers are always in the stands supporting their teammates and encouraging exceptional performances before, during and after their own events. This is not an accident, it is by design.

I was present at the USA Swimming's Nadir in 1988. I am proud to have watched them make the USA the best swimming nation in the World for the last 14 years. USA Swimming is arguably one of the great teams in the history of the Olympic Games.

This issue of Olympic Coach magazine focuses on teams. Even if you coach what is typically considered an individual sport, it is important to view the lesson from swimming. Your program is stronger with a team attitude.

We have a great issue packed with solid information for coaches from managing a staff, building a traditional powerhouse, using peaking strategies for teams to getting insights from the new Women's Soccer coach—Greg Ryan.



Photo: Neil Hodge/USA Swimming



You Were Hired To: Win NOW or Win Consistently

by April Heinrichs

Coach Heinrichs is the former US Women's National (Soccer) Team Head Coach. She is currently serving as a Team Leader for the United States Olympic Committee Performance Services Division and is responsible for Team Sports and Technical Sports.

You just landed your 'dream job,' now it's time to set your vision and philosophy in motion. Before you get started, it is important to understand the philosophy of those who hired you. Assess how their vision of the program matches up to your vision. Hopefully, you're on the same page, or you have some internal persuasion issues to take on along with the coaching task at hand. One of the major considerations are: does your employer want you to win now or win consistently? Do you have a one year contract or five year guaranteed contract?

In the US, we have four primary models for developing winning programs:

1. Win, despite the odds (requires great talent pool).
2. Throw money at the sport.
3. Youth Movement (select a younger pool and give them the player/team development opportunities).
4. Build a "pipeline" from the top down or the grass roots up.

"LEADERS BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND"

As the coach, you are the leader of your program. If you can focus on building a vertically integrated program, it becomes a matter of re-loading and not re-building to sustain the level of competitive excellence you desire. In order to do that you must create a realistic and durable cycle for player development, team development, coach development, and probably support staff development at the international level. You start with where you want to be at the end of the year or the end of a five year cycle and build backwards.

- The first step is developing and communicating your goals, objectives and plan.
- What do you want the athletes to be able to achieve by the end of your goal?

- How can you help coaches implement the requisite technical, tactical and psychological skills necessary for international success?
- What if a player or coach leaves the program, have you identified another to fill the role so the program doesn't sustain a setback?
- Does he/she have the ability to step in immediately and positively impact the team?
- Do you like your team's or program's culture?
 - If yes, how do you sustain it over time and as your program expands?
 - If you don't like the culture, what is your plan to change the culture?
- Does your administration buy into the plan? If not, identify challenges and opportunities to advocate for your plan.
- Engage politically, even though you just want to coach your team. Knowledge is power!

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING TALENT NOW WITH A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Player development is not an exact science in which we can predict 'when' a player will be able to compete at the international level. Players need time and opportunities at the national team level to become confident at the training level and then prove himself/herself in the international arena. One of the greatest challenges in identifying and developing players is the size of our country. What level of confidence do you have in your selection system that you've found all the best players/athletes? Building a 'seamless' scouting network is going to facilitate success as quickly and securely as training the athletes once you have them in camp. Another challenge is the varying degrees of athlete's physical and emotional maturity. It is important to realize that early maturation in sport is not a good indicator of later sport success...labeling a

young soccer player, ‘the next Mia Hamm’ is not only an overstatement, it does the young player a disservice in labeling her before she is ready to take the responsibility of soccer’s success in America on her shoulders, like Mia Hamm once did.

Another factor influencing the cycle of development and identification of athletes is one where the coach or coaches watch a competition, identify the athlete(s), select them for the next level, the athlete receives training and games experience, is evaluated by the coach or coaches, selected again and moved to the appropriate level of competition. After your players perform in training, they must prove they can thrive in the ‘competitive cauldron.’

More and more we must put national team players on national team fields with national team coaches at the international level. Does your National Governing Body have the resources to give your players/teams the right amount of international games? If not, how can you supplement this much needed ‘games’ environment?

For the female athlete, playing against boys is great for their athletic development and should be pursued. The coach must have a deep understanding of the value and its limitations. Playing against boys often elevates the competitiveness of a training/scrimmage environment, which can be beneficial, but it also limits your player’s ability to demonstrate and refine her ‘personality’ when the boys are physically quicker, faster and stronger, yet not tactically superior. Over time, if too many games with boys are scheduled the female athlete potentially can lose motivation, confidence and

desire to experiment. The key here is to find quality environments, not over schedule games against boys.

When is it right to create a ‘youth movement’ in your selection process? If you do not have the players to compete now, if you believe the future is brighter, if you lack quality playing environments for the best players in your country, and if your players are performing now but a big turnover is expected soon; then NOW is the time to plan for your successes down the road.

A critical factor for success at the National Team level or at any level, is the belief you’re on the right track, confidence you’ve sought outside input for your plan, persistence to overcome the many challenges, and the unwavering and unflappable spirit you embody despite the outside pressures – and there will be pressures. It is the ability for you to “stay the course” when the external pressures increase. While coaching the US Women’s National Team for five years, we rarely entered a tournament with the focus to win. Our goals weren’t simply to win, it was to provide the team with the opportunity to develop, develop younger players and recovering player, look for good chemistry in groups on the field, test players in escalating pressurized situations, allow them the opportunity to experiment and to emphasize winning, but never did we train, play or compete with a ‘win at all cost’ attitude. If you do this, you will surely make decisions that hinder individual and team development rates, team cohesion, ‘what if’ planning and your own vision of winning when it matters. It goes without saying; we played to WIN, but never at the expense of a player’s opportunity to develop or at the team’s opportunity to grow



Photo: Koichi Kamoshida - Getty Images



Photo: Andy Lyons - Getty Images

within a tournament. Anyone can tear down a building, your job is to build it; and quite often from the ground up. Have a one, two or five year plan. Be flexible within it to adjust based on factors that evolve over time, stick to your plan (don't be thrown off course because you lost a game or tournament), know the experience you bring to the job puts you in the unique position to know what it's going to take to succeed, and most important don't let outside forces, nay sayers, media, administrators and the long list of those who never attend training influence your confidence, decisions and vision!

Priorities for the U.S Women's National Team:

- Periodization
- Training Methods and Mentality
- Technical and Tactical Development
- Teaching Psychological Skills Training
- Creating a competitive and challenging environment for elite athletes
- Providing consistent and immediate feedback on an individual basis
- Integrate Performance Enhancement expertise – the “Margin of Victory”
- Staying the course with a ‘Growing versus Winning’ Philosophy

Priorities for the Youth National Teams:

- National Team players on National Team Fields with National Team Coaches
- Creating a competitive and challenging environment for elite athletes
- Training Methods and Mentality
- Self-Coaching

- Physical preparedness
- Objective and Periodic Physical Testing
- Sustained Year Round Programming
- Teaching Psychological Skill Training
- Guaranteed International Games year
- Training Camps per year
- Integrate Performance Enhancement expertise – the “Margin of Victory”

Keys to Our Success:

- The Talent Pool
- The “Massive” Infrastructure
- Decision-Making
- Resources / Financials
- Organizational Skills
- Vertical Integration
 - from our Under 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21 and Senior Women's National Teams
 - communication with the ‘Sphere of Influence’
 - consistent application of the principles from our Youth to the Senior Team

The structure for “sustained competitive excellence” in Women's Soccer is a highly evolved system of identification, evaluation, development and creating highly competitive environments for all the athletes starting at age 13. The concepts are adaptable to any sport, depending on the level of athlete you are coaching you may not have the number of steps in the pyramid, but the concepts can be developed to provide you with a program that can methodically develop players, coaches and administrators that all influence performance and assist in your goals of winning consistently.

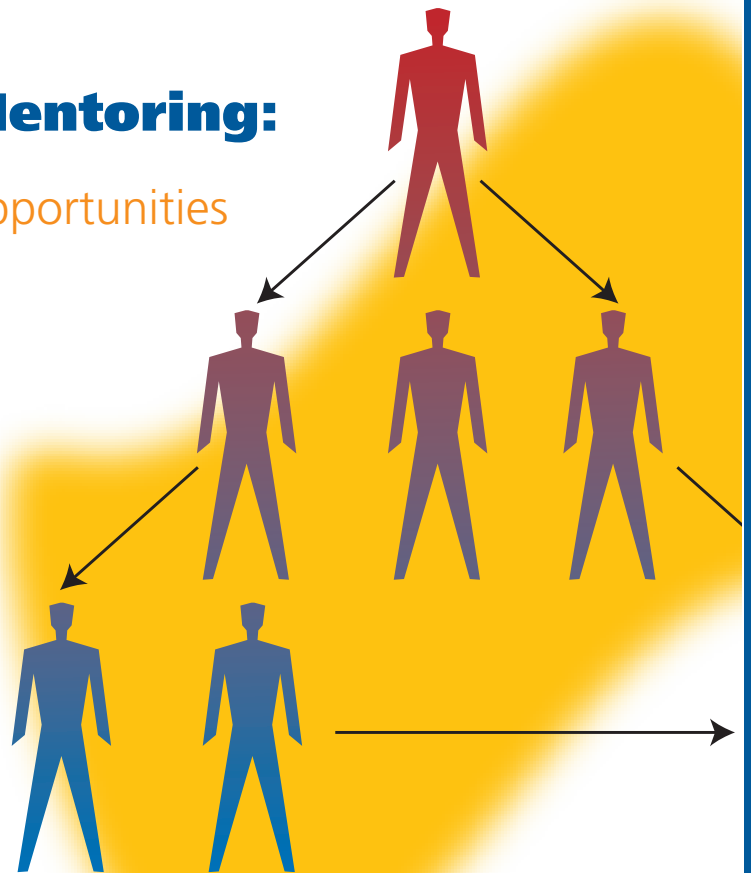
Staff Management and Mentoring:

Delegate Responsibility and Offer Opportunities for Development

by Pat Summitt

Pat Summitt- University of Tennessee Basketball Coach, NCAA's winningest Basketball Coach, and the 1984 Gold Medal Olympic Coach.

Staff management along with their development is key to sustaining competitive excellence. Pat Summitt is one of those remarkable coaches whose program is always re-loading, but you can see from these excerpts (from Cecile Reynaud's excellent book, *She Can Coach*) that the strength of the program stems from building a strong and cohesive staff to surround the development of the athletes.



HIRING AND ORGANIZING YOUR STAFF

Regardless of the size of your staff, an organizational chart is vital to efficient management. It shows the chain of command and the flow of communication, and the visual representation of the program minimizes confusion by showing supervisory responsibilities.

When organizing your staff, remember to consider support personnel and others you work with on a consistent basis. Trainers, strength coaches, academic advisers, compliance officers, and members of the media relations, marketing and operations departments are all part of our program. A clear plan that details the proper flow of information and channels for contact reduces the risk of miscommunication and ineffectiveness.

Hiring your staff may be the most consequential aspect of management. Hire good people and your headaches will be greatly reduced. My philosophy has always been to hire bright, talented, loyal people who have a passion for coaching and working with young people. Surrounding yourself with great people is important because they have a significant impact on your success.

Learning to gather appropriate information about the applicants and make sound evaluations is a lifelong process. When beginning the hiring process, first determine which qualities and skills are the most important for the new staff member's success. Filling

positions on a staff is like recruiting for your team: You recruit those who will embrace and thrive within your philosophy and who meet the needs of your team. Assess your staff's strengths and weaknesses and look for someone who can balance the ledger.

When I hire assistants, I look first for loyalty. I also want someone who is on the cutting edge in the field. I want to know their background and their knowledge of the game. I look for someone who can relate well to everyone—especially the student-athletes—and inspire them. I find that student-athletes need people who can connect with them and be on their level at times.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Outlining the expectations of each position on your staff in terms of job duties, professionalism, and personal conduct, so that everyone is aware of each other's responsibilities, can head off potential problems.

Once they understand their specific roles and responsibilities trust your staff to get their jobs done professionally. You must give your staff the freedom to do their jobs, just as you must give players the freedom to perform. The similarities in

facilitating the smooth operation of a staff and molding a cohesive, successful team are undeniable. You want to key in on players' strengths and allow them to do what they do best. In the same way, your staff members need to feel that they are trusted, respected, and expected to utilize their talents for the betterment of the team.

Instilling trust and confidence in your staff gives them a sense of ownership, which then feeds their investment in the program, feelings of belonging and contributing, and a sense of urgency when needed. Instead of feeling like a puppet, capable only of following orders, they will rise to their potential and understand that their actions enhance the performance of the team and the program.

AVOIDING MISTAKES IN STAFF MANAGEMENT

The most important and obvious safeguard is to hire the right person for the job. A thorough interview process is key to making the best decision. Gathering information from a variety of sources is crucial. Communication with the candidate and a careful review of the application materials are also important.

Gathering feedback makes the staff feel like valuable members of the team and is an important resource for generating new ideas or gaining the inside track on a specific situation.

Another important aspect of staff management is listening. Communication involves a flow of information not only to your staff but also from your staff. Gathering feedback makes the staff feel like valuable members of the team and is an important resource for generating new ideas or gaining the inside track on a specific situation.

Understanding when and how to confront staff members is one of the more difficult lessons to learn as a manager. A key to good management is recognizing flaws in the system or behavior that isn't conducive to the program's success and then talking about and correcting the situation.

My staff has taught me that you can work incredibly hard and still have fun. You can be competitive, but you don't have to be serious all the time. Ideally, your players and staff will look back on their careers with fond memories. Good management goes a long way toward fulfilling that goal.

Excerpted with permission from *She Can Coach!*, edited by Cecile Reynaud. Copyright 2005 by Human Kinetics, Inc.



Thoughts and Considerations for **TEAM-SPORT PEAKING**

by IÑIGO MUJIKA
Department of Research and Development
ATHLETIC CLUB BILBAO
Basque Country

Iñigo Mujika is one of the leading researchers in the area of Peaking or Tapering. We have ask him to provide his thoughts on team sport peaking. There is not much research in this area for team sports. However, Mujika's research shows that performance improves between 0.5 to 6.0% (average 3%) in individual athletes using tapering strategies, that is too large of an improvement to ignore the possibilities of working within the framework of teamsports.

INTRODUCTION

The periodization of training is a method that allows athletes from individual sports to peak at the desired competition of the season. A fitness and performance peak is usually achieved by these athletes through months of hard work followed by a period of tapered training, culminating with the most important race or championship. Although many of the physiological, psychological and performance benefits of such a strategy are now well established (Mujika et al. 2004), this approach may not always be the most suitable for team sport athletes. Indeed, whereas individual sport athletes can afford to perform below expectations and even miss competitions that do not fall within the scope of their major goals, always in the best interest of such major goals, team sport athletes usually need to perform at a high level week after week if they want to be in contention for the championship when it really counts.

Two competitive situations come to mind with regards to tapering and peaking for team sports: pre-season training to face a league format competitive season in the best possible condition; and peaking for a major international tournament such as the Olympic Games or World Championships.

PEAKING FOR THE REGULAR SEASON

Most coaches understand that having a team at peak fitness levels for the duration of a season is simply not possible. But it is important to prescribe periodized conditioning programs in the preseason to make sure that players' physical capacities are optimal at the onset of the competitive season. In a recent investigation, Coutts and colleagues (in press) examined the influence of preseason deliberate overreaching and tapering on muscle strength, power, endurance and selected biochemical responses in semi-



Photo: Lisa Bluenfeld - Getty Images

professional rugby league players. The athletes completed 6 weeks of progressive overload training with limited recovery periods, followed by a 7-day progressive taper. Following the overload period, multistage fitness test running performance was significantly reduced (12.3%), and most other strength, power and speed performance measures tended to decrease (range -13.8 to -3.7%). Significant changes were also observed in selected biochemical markers such as plasma testosterone to cortisol ratio, creatine kinase, glutamate, and glutamine to glutamate ratio ($P < 0.05$). Following the taper, a significant increase in peak hamstring torque and isokinetic work was observed, as well as minimum clinically important increases in the multistage fitness test, vertical jump, 3-RM squat, 3-RM bench press, chin-up and 10-m sprint performance. Moreover, all biochemical markers tended to return to baseline values. The authors concluded that muscular strength, power and endurance were reduced following the overload training, indicating a state of overreaching. The most likely

explanation for the decreased performance was increased muscle damage via a decrease in the anabolic-catabolic balance. However, it was shown that a subsequent progressive taper may induce super compensation in muscular strength, power and endurance, related to increased anabolism and a decrease in muscle damage (Coutts et al. In press).

Repeated sprint ability, which is a basic performance requirement for most team sports, can also be enhanced through periodized training and tapering. Bishop and Edge (2005) investigated the effects of a 10-day exponential taper subsequent to 6 weeks of intensive training on repeated-sprint performance in recreational level team-sport female athletes. Subjects were tested for repeated sprint ability (5 x 6-s all-out cycling sprints every 30 s) before and after the tapering period. The 10-day taper resulted in a non-significant increase in both total work (4.4%; $P = 0.16$) and peak power (3.2%; $P = 0.18$), and a significant decrease in work decrement ($10.2 \pm 3.5\% \text{ v } 7.9 \pm 4.3\%$; $P < 0.05$). Taken together, these investigations show that basic training principles that can be effective in individual sport athletes, also apply in the case of

team sports. Coaching and conditioning staff should therefore take these principles into account when designing their preseason training programs.

Once the season starts, how a team maintains the peak fitness levels achieved by a successful preseason periodized training program will depend on several factors, such as time between games, travel, competitiveness of the opposition, injury, minutes of match play and physiological adaptations to competition, recovery and training of individual players. All these variables must be integrated into the in-season training plan for the team to retain or further improve early season fitness and performance levels.

PEAKING FOR A MAJOR TOURNAMENT

Most major international tournaments take place at the end of a long club level competitive season. In an attempt to elicit players' peak performance, some nations decide to advance their domestic competition calendar to allow the players to rest and re-build their



fitness to compete for their national teams. A different approach is to delay the end of the domestic season so that the players are still in a competitive shape when they join their national squad. Both strategies have pros and cons, and the scarce scientific literature available is not conclusive regarding the optimal approach to peak for a major tournament.

Bangsbo and colleagues (2006) recently described the preparation program of the Danish National football team for the 2004 European Championship. After the club season, the players rested for 1-2 weeks before preparing for the Championship. The preparation lasted 18 days divided in two 9-day phases. The amount of high intensity exercise was similar in both phases (i.e. training intensity was maintained), while the total amount of training was reduced in the second phase (i.e. training volume was tapered). This is in agreement with previous tapering recommendations based on studies from individual sport athletes (Mujika and Padilla 2003). Nevertheless, these authors emphasized that because of large individual differences among players in the amount of high-intensity work performed during the tactical components of the training sessions, a careful evaluation of individual physical training load is essential, even during training time not specifically dedicated to fitness development (Bangsbo et al. 2006).

Ferret and Cotte (2003) have also reported on the differences in preparation of the French National football team in the lead-up to the World Cups of 1998 and 2002. The former World Cup campaign saw “Les Bleus” taking home the valued trophy. Four years later, an almost identical group of players returned home sooner than expected, after a disappointing qualifying round without a single victory and not scoring a single goal. According to these authors, in 1998 the team had enough time and biological resources prior to the qualifying round to further develop the athletic qualities of the players through two solid training phases followed by a 2-week tapering phase, characterised by high intensity training situations (friendly games) and a moderate training volume, which allowed the elimination of the negative effects of training (fatigue) while maintaining the adaptations previously achieved. In contrast, in 2002 all players were only available to the national team 8 days prior to the beginning of competition, and medical and biochemical markers indicated that most players were severely fatigued after the club season. In those conditions, the technical staff could not carry out a development training phase followed by a taper to peak the physical qualities of the players prior to the World Cup (Ferret and Cotte 2003).

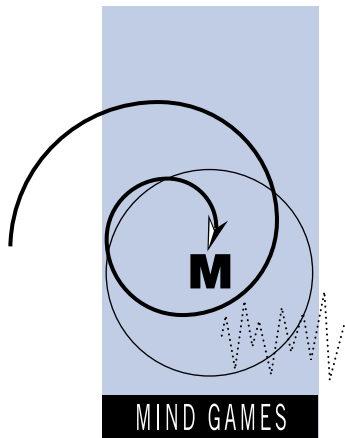
The above reports suggest that an ideal approach to peak for a major international tournament would start several weeks before the first game, with an initial period of recovery after the club season, followed by a re-building period, and finalised with a pre-tournament taper characterised by low training volume and

high intensity activities. Nevertheless, there are examples of successful “unorthodox” approaches that challenge these ideas about optimal preparation. For instance, the Danish National football team unexpectedly won the 1992 European Championship after the team was invited to compete ten days before the beginning of the tournament, due to the exclusion of Yugoslavia. At that time, half the players had already finalised their participation in various European leagues and had been out of training for 3 to 5 weeks, whereas the other half were still competing in the Danish domestic championship. All players were only available to the coaching staff 6 days before the first game. The team’s success has been partly attributed to the fact that players were not physically and psychologically exhausted, as it is often the case after long and tough domestic and international club seasons followed by a long national team preparation and a demanding international tournament (Bangsbo 1999).

It is thus clear that there are different approaches to optimise team-sport performance in the lead-up to a major tournament. In this respect, the coaching staff should take into consideration biological, technical, tactical, psychological and sociological variables when deciding on the most suitable strategies to get the best performance out of their group of players.

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Great Groups, Great Coaches,

By Sean McCann, USOC Sport Psychologist

**"GREAT GROUPS ALWAYS SEE THEMSELVES AS
WINNING UNDERDOGS"**

Warren Bennis & Patricia Biederman

"SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF"

Mike Shanahan

**"IF YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR PLAYERS, HOW
CAN YOU COACH THEM?"**

Joe Torre

The book, *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration*, by Warren Bennis and Patricia Biederman, examines what the authors call "great groups." While reading this book, I was struck by the similar themes regarding excellence in the books by two great coaches of championship teams, Joe Torre of the New York Yankees, and Mike Shanahan of the Denver Broncos.

Organizing Genius focuses on groups such as the Manhattan Project, Walt Disney's studio, Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign team, and Xerox Corporation's PARC group which developed the mouse, laser printers and the graphics interface that was the basis for both Apple and Microsoft Windows software. The book's case studies are fascinating reading for any coach interested in improving teams. To provide a taste of the book, I selected four lessons that are also found in coaching philosophies of Shanahan and Torre, two very different coaches, who achieved success.

LESSON 1: Greatness starts with great people.

Bennis & Biederman quote Bob Taylor, the leader of PARC, who said "you can't pile together enough good people to make a great one." Shanahan and Torre both talk about the effort required to identify talent. According to Shanahan, the Broncos weren't looking for a running back in the 1995 draft. Nonetheless, when a talent they had studied extensively and identified as a likely third round pick was still available in the sixth round, they did not hesitate to draft Terrell Davis, who went on to win the National Football League's most valuable player award. Joe Torre talks about making a decision between two veteran pitchers, local hero pitcher David Wells and Roger Clemens. A controversial trade came down to a belief that Clemens was a better talent, and Clemens played a key role in New York's world championship. Coaches know that an excellent system can produce a very good team (Princeton basketball, for example), but to produce a truly great team, you need superb talent.



Photo: Brian Bahr - Getty Images

LESSON 2: Every great group has a strong leader.

Mike Shanahan and Joe Torre have a very different interpersonal and management/ coaching styles, but both succeed by focusing on their strengths. Shanahan is intense and driven. John Elway describes Shanahan as “a classic grinder. Classic. He never lets up. His thumb pushes on you harder and harder when you win. When you lose surprisingly enough, he pulls it back, but when you win there is no letup.” Torre, perhaps due to baseball’s focus on individuals, spends a great deal of time massaging egos, communicating clearly and having a good relationship with his players so they will accept his decisions to sit them down when he needs to. His strength is evident in his calm response to the unique craziness surrounding a New York team and his willingness to stand behind tough personnel decisions. The *Organizing Genius* authors summarize the leader strength issue by saying, “the leader has to be worthy of the group. He or she must warrant the respect of people...Everyone must have complete faith in the leader’s instincts...”

Numerous Olympic coaches have seen that optimism doesn’t replace talent, but pessimism will prevent talent from blooming.

LESSON 3: Great groups are optimistic, not realistic.

There is a youthful energy in great groups, who “don’t yet know what they can’t do” Bennis and Bierman explain. In other words, “great things are accomplished by talented people who think they will accomplish them.” Shanahan describes his experience as the offensive coordinator to head Coach George Seifert of the San Francisco 49ers. After a bad loss, Shanahan and his family drove home listening to a sport radio poll saying that 76 percent of the callers felt Shanahan should be fired, and 80 percent felt Seifert should be fired. At a press conference the next day, Seifert was asked about the poll, and he said he wanted to thank the 20 percent who supported him! Seifert, Shanahan and the 49ers went on to win the Super Bowl that year, despite all the doubters. The St. Louis Rams Super Bowl victory is another example of unrealistic optimism bearing fruit. Numerous Olympic coaches have seen that optimism doesn’t replace talent, but pessimism will prevent talent from blooming.

LESSON 4: The leaders of great groups give them what they need and free them from distraction.

Joe Torre describes acting as a buffer between the players and a number of things that could complicate their lives or interfere with their performance, including things like the media, family, and even occasionally, Yankee owner George Steinbrenner. Mike Shanahan talks similarly of attending to many small details for the Broncos that give the players the impression that no organization does a better job for their players. Shanahan worries about details such as the type of food at the breakfast table, giving athletes’

vouchers for two pay TV movies at their hotel to keep them from going out, and like Torre, buffering the athletes from external distractions. One highly successful Olympic coach had a similar Olympic Games strategy with his staff, permitting no logistics questions among staff when athletes were present. By only talking about certainties in front of athletes, he figured that the athletes would not start thinking about “what if” scenarios regarding logistics or other issues over which they had no control. *Organizing Genius* describes the simple, focused environment that results when all extraneous factors are removed.

CAN YOU CREATE AND COACH A GREAT TEAM?

Books by successful coaches such as Shanahan and Torre are valuable tools for other coaches. *Organizing Genius* is also a gold mine of ideas for coaches looking to push teams to a higher level. While Joe Torre, Mike Shanahan, and Walt Disney are three very different types of leaders, the common themes show that there clearly are some right and wrong ways to go about achieving greatness.

Greatness never just happens. In every case:

- Being great is an explicit goal of a group or team that will not accept simply being good.
- There is an incredible drive to overcome obstacles that usually start at the top.
- There is a talent pool that allows the coach to implement a good system.
- The team describes this focused, intense effort as the best thing they have ever done.
- The majority of the team sees the stress and strain of competing as an enjoyable challenge; the great groups always have fun as they pursue greatness.

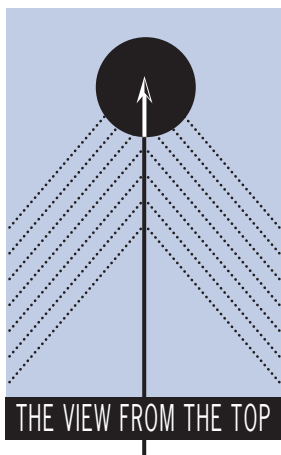
Not everyone is lucky enough to have all the ingredients of a great team, but any coach would benefit by identifying the ingredients you do and don’t have, adding as many elements as you can and taking a shot at the goal of team excellence. As hockey great Wayne Gretzky said, “You miss 100 percent of the shots you don’t take.”

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Think Like a Champion: Building Success One Victory at a Time. Mike Shanahan with Adam Shefter. 1999. Harper Business.

Joe Torre’s Ground Rules for Winners. Joe Torre with Henry Dreher. 1999 Hyperion Books.



The View From the Top: Greg Ryan

Greg Ryan is the Head Coach and Technical Director of the U.S. Soccer's Women's National Team. He had served as an assistant coach on April Heinrich's staff since January of 2004 and was promoted to the Head Coach in April of 2005. He immediately led the team to the 2005 Algarve Cup. He is only the fifth head coach in a program with a 262-50-35 record.

How did you get into Coaching?

After finishing my professional career in 1984 with the Chicago Sting, I went back to school at Southern Methodist University. After graduating from SMU, I applied for my first head coaching position at the University of Wisconsin. I got the job with the "Badgers". I am still a huge Badger Fan.

What do you think are the qualities of a good head coach?

- Belief/Confidence in his/her players/organization to achieve success
- Clear Vision to achieve success
- 100% Commitment to success
- Ability to make tough decisions because there are plenty of them
- Seeks input from many respected sources but confidence to make the "final call"
- Ability to relate to players on many levels from sports specific to off the field life experiences.

What are three qualities a coach should develop in his players or themselves?

- Competence
- Confidence
- Commitment

Can you tell us about memorable moments that you have experienced as a coach?

I have many memorable moments, but two moments stand out:

Seeing the US Team Win the Olympic Gold Medal, while acting as an assistant to April Heinrichs in 2004. It was great to see the team's hard work pay off and to see April win a Gold Medal. I have never seen anyone put so much of themselves into a job.

Winning the 2005 Algarve Cup as the "Interim Head Coach" with a team of new young players in the absence of former national team greats such as Mia Hamm, Julie Foudy, Brandi Chastain, Joy

Faucett and Briana Scurry. I was not sure that it would be possible without so many star players. The team did not give up a goal in the tournament which was a first for our team in the Algarve Cup.



What do you look for in selecting your assistant coaches?

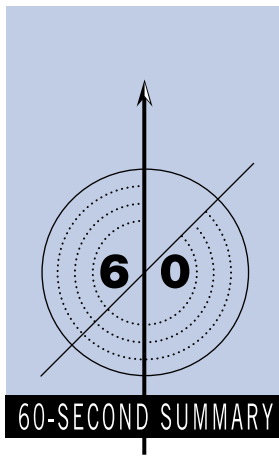
- Competence – The assistants have to be great coaches
- Trust – These have to be people that I trust without reservation
- Balance – I need to balance my personality and/or coaching abilities with the rest of my staff. This balance applies to specific areas within the team such as:
Who will coach the defenders, goalkeepers, forwards, or midfielders?
Who can balance my personality for the benefit of the team? If I am too intense, who can calm the team? If I do not want to be the heavy all of the time, so who has the "bite" to get into the team?
- I want assistant coaches who will challenge my thoughts and ideas. I cannot have a "yes" person as an assistant coach. I want strong coaches who will fight me over my decisions if they believe I am wrong or just want to play the "devils advocate" to look at things from a different perspective. I need their full support once a decision is made, but I ask for their intense scrutiny prior to making important team decisions.

What is the biggest challenge that you face?

My biggest challenge is take a "New USA Team" and win World Championships. For us, it is the 2007 World Cup and the 2008 Olympics. Expectations are that the US Women's Soccer Team should always win these events. The reality is that it is getting more difficult with each passing year as the rest of the world is investing in their women's soccer teams. We do not have the experienced team that won the 1996 and 2004 Olympics. However, we do have the talent and passion to win these championships.

What are key lessons that you have learned?

- Players win championships. My job is to create an environment in which our team can express their abilities at the highest level. This requires coaching and discipline. However, I believe that it also involves encouraging freedom, creativity and the sense that players can express themselves outside the lines of our strategy and team blueprint. I believe championships are won in this area that goes well beyond the domain of coaching. My job is to encourage this, not stifle it. I want to empower my players to execute our plan but be prepared to improvise as they go.
- Personally, I have learned to be patient in making decisions. As a young coach, I tended to react and make immediate decisions. Things work better for me if I step away and take a little additional time to think about things prior to making a final decision. This is true for things as diverse as player selection or dealing with team rules violations. I think this has helped me have better relationships with my players and the people that I work with. In team sports, you often have to make immediate decisions in a game. However, I try to bring patience and composure even to my decisions on the bench.



What Every Coach Should Know About Energy Systems

When we talk about training it can be simplified to stress, recovery and adaptation. As a coach, your job is to stress the physiology of the athlete through training, the athlete has a period of recovery (rest) and the athlete's physiology adapts. Through adaptation the athlete can gradually develop the capability to handle more training or training with more intensity. As the coach, you manipulate combinations of training frequency (how often you train) training intensity (how hard you train) and training duration (how long you train) and the type or mode of training.

Another key factor is how the training you do relates to your sport or specificity. If I run long distance, I have improved my endurance adaptation, but it does not transfer the adaptation to developing strength and power. Physiologists call this **SAID** — **Specific Adaptations to Imposed Demands**. The athlete by following your training plan will adapt to the type of load that you place upon them.

We have all heard of Non-oxidative (Anaerobic) and Oxidative (Aerobic), but what do these terms really mean. Non-oxidative (without oxygen) supplies rely on using stored resources (ATP, CP and production of lactic acid) and do not go into using oxygen to produce more energy. Oxidative (with oxygen) the body uses oxygen to aid in energy production through what is called the Krebs cycle. This whole process is called oxidation phosphorylation.

The standard energy of all human motion is the release of energy from ATP (Adenosine Triphosphate). Therefore, all of the components are related to the resynthesis or replenishment of ATP or the removal and/or dissipation of the waste products associated with maintaining our ATP supplies.

The trained athlete has the ability to utilize the system or systems necessary to replenish the ATP that is being utilized. The three major components: ATP/CP, LA and oxidative have the ability to support activities of varying intensities and durations. All athletes have the ability to produce power and work intensities that exceed their ability to resynthesize ATP. For example, even in

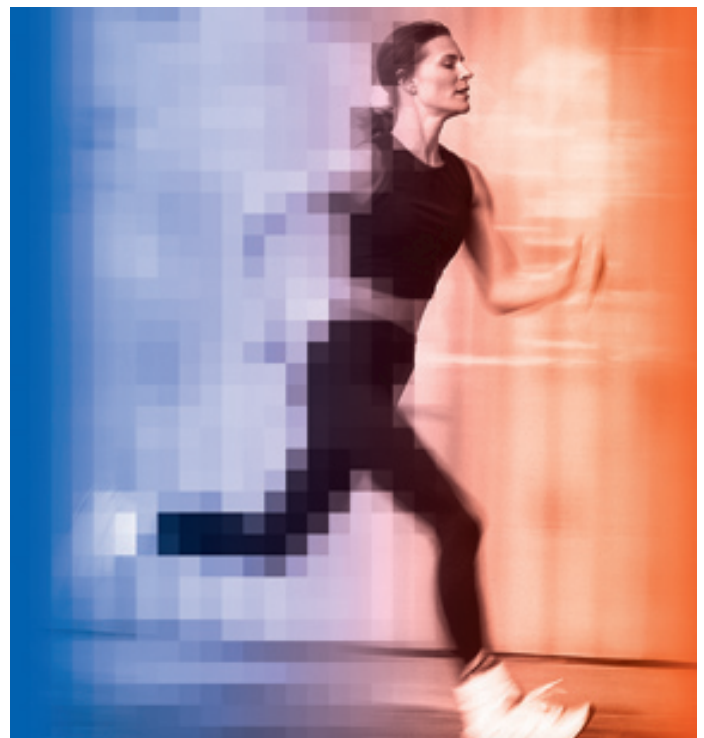
a 100m sprint on the track the athlete slows down due to fatigue. Similarly, in a series of five jumps or explosive lifts, power output drops.

ENERGY SYSTEMS- NON-OXIDATIVE INSTEAD OF ANAEROBIC.

Physiologists have devised a method to look at the energy expenditures of different sports. They have broken energy systems into three categories based on the duration of all-out exercise and the intercellular response. However, it is important to note that while the different systems mentioned provide the resources for activities of varying intensities and power output requirements the systems function in an integrated fashion. Table 2 attempts to quantify the percentage contributed that could be expected from each of the major systems for varying sports or activities.

The first phase is called the **ATP- CP** system. ATP (Adenosine Triphosphate) is stored in all cells, particularly muscles. In a sense, it is free energy because the body stores ATP to make it available for immediate use, however, you can only use it once and it needs recovery time to restore the storage. The ATP system is great for short and quick activities, because it only last for about 5 seconds. It would be used in activities like-- 10 meter sprints, diving, spiking and throwing the shot.

When ATP is used it breaks down into ADP. ADP then can combine with phosphocreatine (PC) to make more ATP, but only for a short period of time around 5-20 seconds. This system requires some recovery time as well. It takes about 25-30 seconds to regain about half of the phosphocreatine stores. These two systems combine for activities like 200m sprints and sports where short intermittent burst of activity are required- for example, basketball, hockey and rugby. A coach can train this system to adapt to some extent. A sample of training would be maximum efforts (5-10 seconds) with rest of about 1 minute.



The next major phase is called the **Lactic (LA)** system. After the 20 seconds of the ATP-PC system, the body requires another ingredient- muscle glycogen (glucose) to be added to continue.

This system begins when phosphocreatine stores are depleted. Lactic acid (or lactate) comes from the breakdown of the glucose released from the muscles. One of the outcomes of this breakdown, is that positive Hydrogen ions are expelled which accumulated in the muscle and cause it to fatigue.

The lactic system is used in a number of sports that do repeat sprinting or high energy activities, such as ice hockey, sprint cycling, 100m swim, lacrosse, soccer, up to the 400 meters in track. Training can be designed to help the athlete improve their tolerance to the build up of the positive hydrogen ions. Bouts of intense training lasting from 25 to 45 seconds with rest ranging from 20 seconds to 3 minutes (determined by the amount of time of the work or the distance covered).

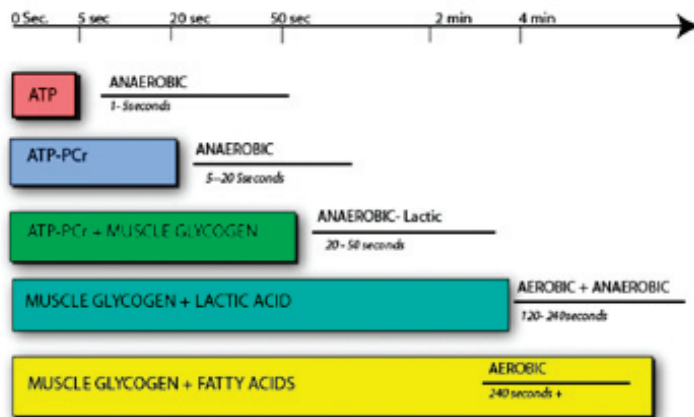
ENERGY SYSTEMS-OXIDATIVE

The third system is the **Oxidative** phase. In this phase, as the term indicates you are using oxygen to fuel the breakdown of carbohydrates first, free fatty acids second and if the exercise continues long enough — protein. Whereas, the previous systems have related to higher intensity work (or power) the aerobic system is more for moderate or low intensity work, but of longer duration.

The oxidative system should be developed to aid in lactic system. The development of the aerobic system aids in lactate removal, so that the athlete can tolerate more lactate.

Training to develop this system consists of the traditional long runs, but can also have repeats of shorter distances of low intensity with reduced rest (20 x 200m with 30 second rest). This example would not have the athlete perform with an all-out effort, but would be at race pace for a mile run.

TABLE 1- Energy Systems



As the coach, you now have to determine what energy system should predominately be trained. E.L. Fox et al, developed a nice chart to help you sort through this. He looked at the dominate energy systems for each sport.

TABLE 2- Sports and Energy Systems

SPORTS	ATP-PC/ LA	LA/O2	O2
Basketball	60	20	20
Fencing	90	10	
Field events	90	10	
Golf swing	95	5	
Gymnastics	80	15	5
Hockey	50	20	10
Distance running	10	20	70
Rowing	20	30	50
Skiing	33	33	33
Soccer	50	20	30
Sprints	90	10	
Swimming 1.5k	10	20	70
Tennis	70	20	10
Volleyball	80	5	15

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COACHING SCIENCE ABSTRACTS

<http://coachsci.sdsu.edu/csa/vol12/table.htm>

This is a great web address. This issue of Coaching Science Abstracts deals with the Specificity of Training. It provides brief synopsis of research and puts it in coaches' terms with what the implications of the research means.

PERFORMANCE COACHING: THE INDIVIDUALIZATION OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES

http://coachesinfo.com/category/becoming_a_better_coach/8/
Nice article by Ellis and Cross on how to and the benefits of individualized training.

SPECIFICITY FOR SPORTS

<http://www.nscs-lift.org/HotTopics/download/specificity%20for%20sport.pdf>

Travis Triplett provides good insight into Strength Training and specificity for sports.

US TENNIS ASSOCIATION COACHING AND SPORT SCIENCE NEWSLETTER

<http://www.playerdevelopment.usta.com/content/fullstory.sps?iNewsid=390539&iType=7418>

USTA produces a very informative Newsletter for Coaches. This issue has some tips on developing an annual plan. Very appropriate for this time of the year.

USA SWIMMING'S COACHES QUARTERLY ARCHIVES

<http://www.usaswimming.org/USASWeb/ViewMiscArticle.aspx?TabId=62&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en&mid=381&ItemId=287>

This article by Genadijus Sokolovas describes in great detail the "Energy Zones in Swimming". Great follow up to the 60 Second Summary piece and useful for more than just swimming coaches.

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OLYMPIC COACH E-MAGAZINE

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