



BeInSynch

Education Newsletter

APRIL EDITION • 2018

Welcome to the 2018 2nd Quarter Education Newsletter! Our goal is to share information with you from experts, volunteers, coaches and officials. If you have suggestions to be included in future newsletters, please send them to shari@usasynchro.org.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- SafeSport – **Important Information**
- Try Creating Awards to Reward Effort
- How to Strengthen Your Toe Point
- 2018 Age Group Natl Team Trials Feedback
- Fun Work-outs
- I'll Try My Hardest
- Judging Clarifications
- Coaching Words



UPCOMING EVENTS

3/29 – 3/31 US Collegiate Natls Oro Valley, AZ	4/11 – 4/15 13-15 AG & Jr Natls Lewisville, TX
3/31 – 4/1 US Senior Natls Oro Valley, AZ	4/17 Grade Level 2 Testing Berkeley Heights, NJ
4/7 Grade Level Testing 1-3 Tucson, AZ	4/20 – 4/22 Grade Level 1-4 Testing Huntersville, NC
4/15 13-15 Phase 3 Natl Team Trials Lewisville, TX	5/6 – 5/9 Synchro America Open La Mirada, CA
4/11 12&U Phase 3 Natl Team Trials Lewisville, TX	6/22 – 6/30 US Junior Olympic Championships Oxford, OH



VERY IMPORTANT SAFESPORT MANDATE & COURSE INFO!!!

Starting January 1st, 2018 the SafeSport course has been reorganized into 3 - 30 minute courses. Note: ALL 3 courses must be completed. You will receive a certificate after completing each section – please do not send all of the certificates in. **Only Coaches should send in the “SafeSport Trained” certificate to shari@usasynchro.org.** Everyone else will be listed on the Full Report which will be posted on the website under SafeSport Resources. Below is a link that will take you directly to the course for USA Synchro.

Videos to Enjoy

Videos from the 2018 French Open:

Russian Technical Team -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14ygWFjDrwo>

China Technical Duet –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDK4RuTnPXE&t=39s>

Japan Free Solo –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Sq7678U2sw>

France Free Team –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGzflkZdhmM>

“Mastery” by Rafael Eliassen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mateMgkn1E>

Great Reads

Lighting the Way from Behind: A Lesson for Coaches and Parents

<http://ks.milesplit.com/articles/234394/lighting-the-way-from-behind-a-lesson-for-coaches-and-parents>

Psychological Resilience for Athletes

<http://believeperform.com/performance/11567/>

Lessons for Athletes from Patriots Super Bowl Win

<http://powersourceleominster.com/lessons-for-athletes-from-patriots-super-bowl-win/>

If your expiration date is in 2018, you will need to take the Full Course in 2018 and the Refresher Course in 2019. Anyone who had an expiration date of 2019, 2020 or 2021 will need to take the Refresher course in 2018 and the Full Course in 2019. Anyone with an expiration date of 2020 will need to take the Refresher Course in 2019. You can find your specific expiration dates on the Coach Certification lists. The Refresher Course will be released June 18th, 2018.

Note: Spanish and French translations of the online course will be available April 9th, 2018.

Please use this link and access code to complete the course.

Link to SafeSport course for USA Synchro

<https://safesport.org/authentication/register?token=ef4afb93-c79a-426f-92cb-0c5ce3e0a2f6>

Access Code

4CRM-NJDP-FGLI-HWGH

As mandated by the USOC, ALL individuals listed on the next page MUST complete the SafeSport course as soon as possible!

If you have questions, please contact shari@usasynchro.org.

SAFESPORT – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Everyone has a role to play in creating a healthy environment for our sport and our athletes. SafeSport helps raise awareness about misconduct in sport, promote open dialogue, and provide training and resources. Providing a safe environment to protect the health and well-being of athletes is a high priority for USA Synchronized Swimming.

PLEASE NOTE: It is now **MANDATORY** for the following individuals to complete the course.

USA Synchro

(Staff, Board Members, Support Staff, and Consultants)

National Team

(Head and Assistant Coaches, Volunteers, Consultants & Chaperones)

National Talent/National Elite Camps/Olympic Development Camps

(Head Coaches and Assistants, Consultants, Volunteers & Chaperones)

National Team, International Relations & LTAD Committees

(All 18 years old and over)

Club Teams

(All Volunteer, Employed & Contractor Coaches and Chaperones)

Club Teams

(All Support Staff; includes Dance, Acrobatics, Flexibility, Swimming, etc.,
at any Training Facility)

All Judges

(Levels 1 through FINA A)

Approved Club Options/Private Invitations/ICE Program Participants

All Staff - including coaches, managers and adults traveling with the team)

Optional but highly recommended

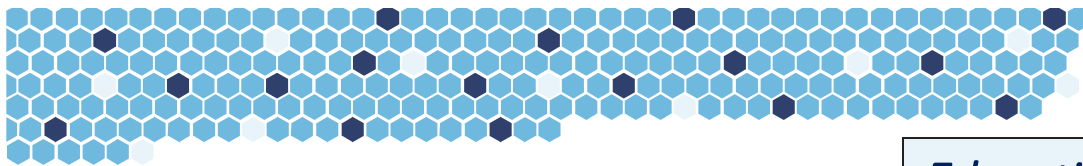
Club Teams - BOD members

Coaches – 15-17 years old

USA Synchro has added an area on the website solely dedicated to SafeSport. Under Resources, you will find information on how to take the course, the complete list of individuals who have taken the course, information on the US Center for SafeSport, and USA Synchro's Abuse and Harassment Policy.

SafeSport for Parents is not an accepted certification, nor is any other outside program.

If you have any questions, please contact shari@usasynchro.org



TRY CREATING AWARDS TO REWARD EFFORT, NOT JUST TALENT OR MERE PARTICIPATION

Below you will find some suggested award titles that may help you create an award that recognizes a strength, ability, or character quality an individual is learning, growing, or developing.

Whatever the title of the award, it should be specific to something that individual has done, is doing, has learned or demonstrated. The items we recognize will be things that grow, your team or group will come to understand they are desired and encouraged character traits, and they will grow and strive to meet those expectations. The individual will also believe in themselves as a learner, listener, encourager, etc as they are recognized for those character and skill traits.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Best Encourager | Most Positive Attitude |
| Most Improved (be specific) | Success Seeker |
| Most Team Spirit | Most Disciplined Skill Development |
| Best Listener | Most Energetic |
| Most Engaged | Most Willing to Learn |
| Most Inquisitive Learner | Most Committed to Practice |
| Best Teammate | Best Sense of Humor |
| Most Cooperative | Most Responsible (be specific) |
| Most Helpful (be specific) | Most Trustworthy |
| Best Instructor | Most Prepared |
| Most Positive | Most Respectful |
| Best Team "Glue" (holds the team together) | |



Education on the horizon...

UPDATED Level 1 CCP

*The **New Level 1 CCP** is now available online for a cost of \$105 – the course includes a free Coaching Tips Manual!*

Judges - Level 1F, 1, 2F, 2, 3F, 3, 4F & 4
Study Guides posted.

Judges – Review Sheets
Posted under Judges Resources on the website.

12&U Age Group Figures 13-15 Age Group Figures

Tips for training can be found in the Members Only area of the website under National Team Trials. (New Figure Count Recommendations & New FINA Figures Coaches Recommendations)

JUDGES UPDATE TRAINING

All Judges who were not able to attend an Update Training are required to complete the online test. Please register online under Events Registration to receive your test.

16-17, 18-19, Junior Elements
Tips for training – coming.

PreSchool Program

Dance, Gymnastics and Swimming program for 4, 5 & 6 year olds – coming.

BASIC LAND TRAINING MANUAL

Tips on how to train basic land skills for beginner and intermediate athletes - coming.

HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR TOE POINT

By Judy Fisk

A strong toe point improves your leg line.

If you are a die-hard dancer, you know the look of your feet can make or break your performance. The same holds true for your fellow Nesties who compete in gymnastics, diving and synchronized swimming. You would all gladly sacrifice a limb for a stronger, prettier toe point. Even if your technique is top notch, audiences and judges want to see a beautifully curved foot at the end of your leg line and they will sigh -- sometimes audibly -- if it is not there. Give the critics what they want. Incorporate foot exercises in your overall conditioning program to strengthen your toe point, improve foot function and boost your performance quality.

Warm up your feet and ankles before you get to the heart of your workout. Take off your shoes and walk or prance around the room for three to five minutes to loosen up your ankles and wake up the muscles of your feet and toes. Place one hand on a wall for support, raise your right foot off the floor slightly and do a set of ankle circles, rotating the foot 10 to 15 times to the right and then left. Repeat with your left foot. Better yet, "write" the letters of the alphabet in the air with your big toe. Starting with your right foot, work your way from A to Z and then repeat with your left foot.

Work the tiny intrinsic foot muscles -- the interossei and lumbricals -- that support your arches and stabilize your toes. Sit on a chair with your feet on the floor in front of you. Pressing the toes of your right foot into the floor, draw the ball of the foot toward your heel. Visualize a balloon slowly expanding under your foot, pushing the arch upward. If you have difficulty isolating the arch, place a hand towel on the floor near your feet and use the toes and ball of the foot to grab the towel and pull it toward you. Alternatively, scatter a variety of small objects -- marbles, crayons, a balled-up pair of socks -- on the floor. Pick up the items with one foot and drop them a foot or so away. Whatever exercise variation you choose, shoot for eight to 12 reps on each foot.



* Finish up your workout with a foot massage to release tension and prevent cramping. Gently press your thumbs into the soles of your feet or roll the bottom of each foot over a golf ball or frozen water bottle.

*If you work your feet hard one day, take a full day to let them rest and recover. On off days, focus your conditioning efforts on other body parts.

*Recognize that improving your toe point is a process. Over time, as your ankles, feet and toes become stronger, a solid toe point should become second nature.



If you've injured any part of your foot or ankle in the past, speak to your doctor or physical therapist about the advisability of specific exercises.



More of this article can be found on the USA Synchro website in the Members Only area under Coaching Resources

MARBLE PICK-UP

Pick up 20 marbles off the floor with your toes and place each marble individually into a bucket or pan. Repeat this daily.

1

2

TOWEL CURLS

Curling your toes on the edge of a towel, scrunch the towel toward your body. This may be difficult at first, but with practice it will become much easier. When it does, place small weights on the towel to increase the resistance.

1

2

2018 AGE GROUP NATIONAL TEAM TRIALS

Judges & Assessors Feedback on Figures, Land & Water Skills

12 & Under Figures

Strengths – very little travel.

Weaknesses – knee and ankle extension and support scull technique and strength.

Straight Ballet Leg – Even though this is a new figure, the athletes are performing it fairly well. Back Layout Position needs to improve with better body and neck extension. During the lift, pay attention to the horizontal leg extension. More height on Ballet Leg. Too much splashing with scull.

Swordfish – Needs more work. Recommendation is to start this figure with paddle scull not barrel, which leads to piking at the beginning, instead of an arch. Most athletes need to switch to support scull way earlier.

13-15 Figures

Strengths – Vertical Positions

Weaknesses - basics need work: Front and Back Layout Positions, spins and travel. Body extension.

Rio – Back Layout Positions need work, Ballet Leg is good, watch for extension and splashing. Athletes need to extend their body and increase their height in the Flamingo and Double Ballet Leg Positions.

Swordtail – This is a fairly short figure and athletes should be able to go slower, especially during the lift of the first leg. Recommend bending the leg with the head in the water. There is no stop in the Vertical Position.

Land Skills

Hips & Splits – Very weak on this test. Need to show a correct Surface Arch Position. Arch should be at the hips and not just upper body. The Knight Positions are not square and look more like a Side Fishtail Position.

Planks – Much better positions for all athletes, especially 12&Unders. Make sure all athletes squeeze their heels together to work on their inner thighs.

Support Scull – Athletes need to perform a full scull with the hands touching the wall on every out move. The core needs to be engaged so the ribcage does not pop out on the out move.

Water Skills

Barracuda and Ballet Legs – similar comments as for figures.

Vertical – seemed to be performed somewhat safely. Only one athletes was at the 8.5 level, everybody else was at 6.5/7.5. This is due to poor support scull technique, short and slow sculls.

Routines

Athletes need to move more throughout the routine, not just at the beginning. 12&Unders did a good job performing their routine and showed that they can handle a fast routine!

(Complete feedback can be found in the National Team Trials section of the Members Only website).



Water Synchro Skills Overall

Weakest area is extension - body, knees and ankles.

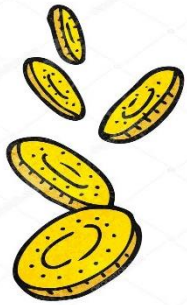
Need to show excellent Back and Front Layout Positions. Practice on land, then add tools like the wall and jugs. These should be worked on every practice.

Watch for splashing in Ballet Leg Positions. Extend the body more and lower the hands underwater to limit the splash.

Use counts throughout figures to help with consistency. A metronome or tapping on the side of the pool are great tools for this.

Shoulders tend to be rounded forward in Back Layout and Vertical Positions. Set the lats down and slightly back to help with this. Work on back strengthening exercises.





FLIP A COIN WORK-OUT

Warm up for 10 minutes:
Run, jump rope, run, jump in place

HEADS

MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS
JUMPING JACKS
LUNGES
PLANKS
CALF RAISES
PUSH-UPS

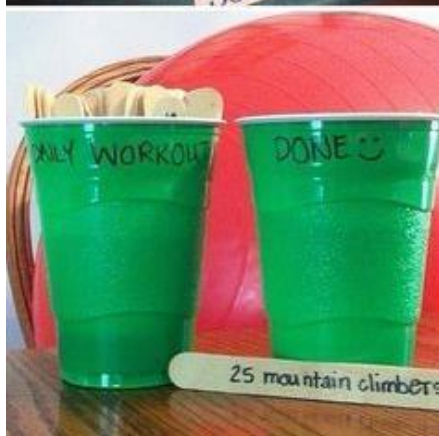
TAILS

BURPEES
CRUNCHES
SQUATS
TRICEP PUSH-UPS
V-UPS
WALL SITS



Flip your coin and then do each exercise
for 30 seconds, repeat 3-4 times.
Can be used for water workouts also!

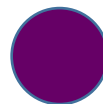
POPSICLE STICK WORKOUT



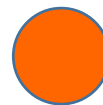
SWIMMING - SKITTLE GAME



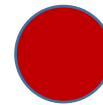
For each color,
swim 50 yards of
corresponding laps



Rotary or Eggbeater



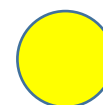
R/L Ballet Leg or R/L Flamingo



Torpedo or Reverse Torpedo Scull



Flutter Kick or Dolphin Kick



Butterfly or Backstroke

I'll Try My Hardest.....

This week I learned a lot about the power in saying- "I'll try my hardest." This weekend I had the pleasure of coaching two of my hard working swimmers in blustery Buffalo, NY as they competed in Phase Two in the journey for a place on the US National Team.

Day 2 of the competition one of my swimmers got a pretty rotten cold that came with a fever sore throat and general feeling of crappiness. She continued to put in 100 and finished 13th! She gave it her all despite the way she felt.

My other swimmer has gone through this all before making National Team last year and training as the alternate for the team meaning she did not get to compete. She came back wanting to prove she deserved a spot on that team... she showed that 100... she finished this week in 1st place!! Boom!

These ladies both move on to phase 3 (in April) and will continue trying their very hardest every day.

There were so many little victories sprinkled into this trip more than even just the above. One of my favorites was a very small personal victory that led to a big life lesson-

I drove in snow for the first time (and didn't hit anything or anyone). On the last day I wanted to take the girls somewhere delicious for a treat and we (thanks to google) stumbled across an awesome bakery (Five Points Bakery). In order for us to go I had to parallel park in a rather tight spot in some pretty hefty snow... I kept saying "I can't do it girls". It made me so warm and proud when they turned on me with full coach mode - "you can do this", "you have full capacity to park this car", "this is your personal hypoxic (the skill they hate the most which consist of 200 yard swimming free and fly and laps of holding your breath)... they hate it, but they did it, so apparently I had to at least "try my hardest". GUYS, I PARKED!

It seems so small.

It is a small thing.

But, what was so big to me and a reason I'm writing about it now, is because I saw in this silly moment more than anything, how well they have learned to believe in someone else. To truly stand behind someone without doubt in their hearts and say - "you can do this. All you have to do is try".

In my job I want to help raise up young woman who are true athletes. Ones that want to achieve their goals and push past their perceived limitations to do so. That's my job. But, I also want to raise up woman that care. Woman that want to see others around them achieve their own personal goals. I want to teach young ladies to pass on what they have learned about their own courage, and ability to "try", to others that may need to hear that someone else believes in them. I saw that this weekend, not only when they believed in me, when I doubted I could. (I didn't even want to try. They made me try.) But also in the way they come to other athletes rescue who were crying on deck after some "failure or fear" during the meet, or the way they congratulated the other athletes they were competing against and wished everyone around them good luck. I learned from them this weekend.

How I succeed in life is important, but how I help someone else succeed is a true legacy. I hope to leave that legacy and encourage others to as well. - Camille Albrecht, Tampa YMCA



Grade Level 5!

Grade Level 5 will be released in April, 2018 and will be posted on the website in the Members Only area under Long Term Athlete Development.

Grade Levels 1-5 will be required for Junior and Senior athletes attending 2019 US Junior and US Senior Nationals. 2019 US 13-15 Age Group Nationals will still have a requirement of Level 1-4. (JO's will still have a requirement of Levels 1 & 2.)

There will also be some revisions to Grade Level 4, so be sure to check in later for those changes. These changes will take effect August 1st, 2018.

Several seminars will be held at National JO's for interested Coaches & Assessors, as well as at Convention. There will also be videos posted online.

Drug Testing & USADA

As competition season gets busier and busier, it is important to ensure we pay attention to all the details associated with synchro competition. One such detail that is important for coaches to attend to is implementation of doping control measures. As a governing body under the United States Olympic Committee, USA Synchro works with the United States Anti Doping Agency (USADA) to ensure fair competition for all of our athletes, providing testing services to deter use of performance-enhancing drugs. USADA can test any USA Synchro athlete member, and is most likely to be in attendance at our elite-level national meets, such as Junior and Senior Nationals. It is possible that one of your athletes has been prescribed a medication that would cause a positive test by USADA; if this is the case, you will need to pursue a Therapeutic Use Exemption. Details on how to pursue this can be found on USADA's website (<https://www.usada.org/substances/tue/>) and a comprehensive database of medications and other substances tested for by USADA is available through the Global Drug Reference Online (<https://www.globaldro.com/Home>).

THE 2017-2018 GRADE LEVELS 1-4 MANUAL IS AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Latest edition of the Manual, dated **9-20-17, v5.0** can be found in the Members Only Section of the website. (Levels 1-5 Manual to be released April, 2018)

**UPDATED SCORESHEETS ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE!
PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ARE USING THE MOST RECENT**

PATCHES FOR GRADES

Patches are available for Levels 1, 2 & 3.

Only \$4.00 each!

Go to www.usasynchro.org

Events Registration / Merchandise



LATE FEES

Please Note:

There is a **\$30 late fee** for applying for sanctions less than 30 days out from a competitions, and **\$60 late fee** for sanctions less than 7 days out.

There is a **\$5/athlete late fee** for registering after the deadline.

GRADE REQUIREMENTS FOR 2018-2019

2018:

US Nationals - Grade Levels 1, 2, 3, 4
National JO's – Grade Levels 1 & 2

2019:

US Nationals 13-15 - Grade Levels 1-4
US Nationals Jr/Sr – Grade Levels 1-5
National JO's – Grade Levels 1 & 2



NEW & IMPROVED CCP LEVEL 1

Starting January 1st, 2018 a new CCP Level 1 was launched. We hope you will find the course much more informative and helpful as your coaching career begins.

The cost of the course is \$105.00 and includes a Coaching Tips Manual (and shipping) which will be sent.

COACHING TIPS MANUAL

This Manual, in color & full of pictures, covers areas such as Drills, Teaching Methods, Common Mistakes, the Causes and How to Correct them.

All of the skills covered relate to the Grade Level Skills, and are perfect for all levels of coaches and athletes.

Cost is \$35/manual. Shipping and handling, not included.

COACH CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (CCP)

CCP 1 - Required for all coaches to be on deck at any meet.

CCP 2 - Required for all coaches to be on deck at any Regional, Zone and National Meet.

CCP 3 - Required for all coaches to be on deck at any Zone and National Meet.

*SafeSport is required for **ALL** coaches to be on deck at any time.*

Please see the list of Mandatory requirements in this newsletter and on the website under SafeSport Resources.

Everyone who had an expiration date of 2016 has now been moved to the “Missing 1 or More” list. Anyone previously on the “Missing 1 or More” list that had an expiration date of 2016 has been removed from this list.

Please do not forget that First Aid, CPR and SafeSport must be current to be fully certified. Send ALL First Aid and CPR certificates to shari@usasynchro.org

Ariana

This figure requires a lot of flexibility and strength that needs to first be developed on land. There is no point in working on this figure in the water if the athlete does not have the skills on land. The land exercises should focus on developing range of motion for shoulders, lower back, hips and the 3 Split Positions as well as building strength in the upper back, glutes and legs in order to perform the beginning and end of the figure.

Examples of a land exercise for lower back flexibility

On the knees, the athlete arches back all the way to the ground and returns to the starting position. Repeat.



Check out the Coaching Recommendations document on the website under Members Only/National Team Trials



JUDGING CLARIFICATIONS

FIGURES

1) Beginning of the Swordfish or Swordtail figure - if the swimmer does a Pike Position past 45°, a zero is given. For deviations with some lesser amount of pike, the deduction system we have is used (this is a design error in most instances). If starting with head up, it must stay that way. If the figure begins with the face in the water and the leg starts to bend, the head may not be lifted (usually to take another breath). If the head is lifted, they will be given a zero.

2) Spins - zeroes will be awarded for – 45° +/- for 180° Spins, 90° +/- for 360° Spins and 180° +/- for Continuous Spins.

ROUTINES

1) Eggbeater alongside a routine - not allowed and routine will be disqualified. If they are staying in pattern, (i.e. lose their noseclip but keeps going while adjusting it), it is considered a judging issue.

2) Interm/Jr/Sr Technical Routines (duet, trio or team) - if one or more swimmers, omit an element or do not perform it properly, is it a zero? If the element is not performed at all or performed incorrectly by one or more swimmers, it is a 0.

ZEROES FOR FIGURES AND ELEMENTS

Some Associations have been “flagging” figures or elements and writing down “possible” scores that could be used after video review. This is not an acceptable practice for judging. (Please remember video review is not required, the statement in the manual is “may be reviewed”.)

- 1) Below are the correct steps for judging figures:
- 2) At most competitions the panel as a whole will make the decision as to if the score should be a 0 or scored. Some referees may want to make the decision themselves, and that is their prerogative.
- 3) If it is decided that the score should be a 0, the referee will instruct the scoring table and fill out a penalty slip.
- 4) If the judging panel is unable to come to an agreement, the official video may be reviewed. If there is no official video, the referee will make the final decision.
- 5) The referee should notify the athlete (although preferably the coach) of the 0.
- 6) There will be no option for a review if there is no “official” video.

Below are the correct steps for judging elements:

- 1) The judge should write down either a 0 or a score to be turned in.
- 2) The scoring table will notify the referee if there is a discrepancy between scores, i.e. some judges give a 0 and some give scores.
- 3) If there is a discrepancy, the referee will review the video and make the decision as to if the award should have been a 0 or a score.
 - a) If the award should be a 0, the scoring table will be instructed by the referee to change all scores to a 0.
 - b) If the element should not have been awarded a 0, and some judges awarded a score, the average of those scores will be used for the judges who gave a zero.
 - c) If all judges awarded a 0 and it is determined that a score should have been awarded, the referee will review the video and their score will be the one used for the entire panel.

***More Judging Clarification can be found in
the Judging Resources area of the USA Synchro
website in the Judging Resources area.***

Coaching Words: You Don't, You Didn't, You Must, We Will

The language we use to help people know how to grow and improve is important.

When we give feedback, we are giving technical information but we are always also building culture between and among us at the same time.

I found myself thinking about language when I recently heard some coaching interactions on the youth sports field but these points are applicable, I think, to the classroom too.

Think for a moment about the phrase **you don't** — as in: “You don't work hard to regain possession when you lose the ball.”

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I found myself thinking about language when I recently heard some coaching interactions on the youth sports field but these points are applicable, I think, to the classroom too.

Think for a moment about the phrase **you don't** — as in: “You don't work hard to regain possession when you lose the ball.” Compare it to the same phrase using didn't instead of don't: “You didn't work hard to regain possession when you lost the ball.”

(This could just as well be, “You don't support your argument with evidence form the text” versus “You didn't support your argument with evidence form the text.” Or “You don't clear up after yourself” versus “You didn't clear up after yourself.”)

'Don't' implies permanence. This thing that you did is something you always do. The language globalizes a mistake. Makes it part of you—a flaw. Maybe even hints at deliberateness. You don't even care. You just do it.

'Didn't' describes one time, an event. Could be that it is an exception, even. You probably always do but you didn't there. It's a comment that expresses much more faith and belief in the person you are talking to.

But even didn't talks focuses on the past—on what went wrong. While that can be useful it's often not as useful as focusing on the solution. It reminds me of something Seahawks coach Pete Carroll says in describing his practice philosophy:

“We're really disciplined as coaches to always talk about what we want to see, the desired outcome, not about what went wrong or what the mistake was. We have to be disciplined about how we use our language. We always talk about the next thing you can do right. It's always about what we want to have happen.”

