



MOTIVATION

How often do we hear that so and so is a motivator of men, some coaches have built a reputation on being a motivational leader but perhaps it would be worth defining what motivation is. Some describe motivation as direction, intensity and persistence. According to McMorris and Hale (2006) direction refers to the type of activity, intensity describes the amount of effort put in or how hard someone is prepared to work at an activity and persistence is the length of time that is devoted to the activity.

All three characteristics of motivation are required if lasting success is to be achieved but there is no doubt that persistence is certainly one of the most frequently overlooked. We live in an instant society, at the flick of a switch we have instant communication around the World through a mobile phone internet or satellite TV. Another switch and three minutes is all that separates us from a dinner prepared in the microwave and instant credit means that even if we cannot afford the latest gadget then it is not a problem as the bank will lend us money that we have not yet earned. Of course sporting prowess cannot be gained that easily, Olympic athletes often train tirelessly for years before becoming an “overnight success”. Instant and free success comes only in fairy stories says Dexter Yaeger and we often hear that achievement only comes before work in the dictionary.

Motivation can also be divided into intrinsic and extrinsic. All athletes have a mix of both but for some the scale is tipped in favor of extrinsic motivation which means that they crave the social recognition which typically follows the winning of events / medals; they are usually driven by the need to compare themselves against others in the same discipline. On the other hand there are many athletes who participate in sport because they love the sport, because they like the feelings that they get from personal achievement, because it builds our self image, these athletes tend to be intrinsically motivated and research suggests that they are equipped better to deal with the inevitable roller coaster of performance. Once we understand what motivates our athletes then we can use the individuals own motivation to help them reach their objectives.

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