



YouthFirst

The Sports Education and Leadership Program at UNLV

Team Climate/ Cohesion

The word cohesion is a Latin word meaning to stick together. There are many different definitions described by many different people. After working with your team and reading the many definitions maybe you will then create your own definition of the word.

"The united ness quality of groups is usually referred to as cohesiveness." W. Neil Widmeyer.

"Team Unity is generally assumed to be one of the foundation blocks upon which effective team per-

Team/Group Cohesion

Every Group has it's individual and team goals. When these all come together it helps in the development of the group and the growth of team cohesion. As a coach of younger children you are the role model and probably one of the very first to introduce them to group and team cohesion. It is im-

portant that is understood at a young age because it will help them to carry on throughout their lives. Cohesion within yours teams will continually develop as the group moves through progressive developmental stages. You as the coach are the director of this process.

formance is built." Zander (1974)

Gross and Martin: "Perceived cohesion as the resistance of the group to disruptive forces."

Back defined cohesion as," The total field of forces causing members to remain with the group."

"Team cohesion is reflected in the groups tendency to stick together while pursuing it's goals and objectives." (Carron 1982)

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Special points of interest:

- ☺ Team Climate
- ☺ 4 Stages of Group Cohesion
- ☺ Factors that influence group cohesion
- ☺ Developing an effective team climate
- ☺ Factors that most effect team climate.

4 Stages of Group Cohesion

1. **Forming** : This process includes familiarizing group members with one another. At this time members engage in social comparisons, assessing one another's strengths and weaknesses and the probability of playing.
2. **Storming**: this level of functioning is characterized by polarization, conflict, and rebellion. (These are not exactly components of team cohesion)
3. **Norming**: This is known as the getting organized stage in which the group comes together. Cooperation among group members begins to improve.
4. **Performing**: The group is finally ready to direct its energy towards its goals. Performing is characterized by a close rapport among group members. Every player is identified and each person's contribution is distinct.

Factors That Influence Group Cohesion

1. **Group Size**: It is said that enjoyment and cohesion decrease as group size increases. The larger the group the less chance there is for tasks and social forms of group cohesion.
2. **Interaction among Group Members**: Performance success is directly linked to the ability of the members to coordinate with one another and to interact simultaneously.
3. **Clarity of Group Goals**: Teams that are highly focused on meeting team and individuals goals have a higher amount of team cohesion. The team is able to be more focused on the same task when it is clear and precise.
4. **Acceptance of Group Goals**: A teams goals are only effective if the entire tam has an agreement on what they are and all have an acceptance.
5. **Warmth of Group Atmosphere**: A strict, authoritarian coaching style is less likely to foster team cohesion that a leadership that balances the need for authority in an appropriate manner.
6. **Clarity of Members' Roles**: Group members who understand their roles in the group will more likely support its goals. This in return allows a greater team cohesion.
7. **Shared Perceptions**: If team members share attitudes, beliefs, and motives it will greatly influence team cohesion.



“ There can be no such thing as a non-cohesive group; it is a contradiction in terms.” (Carron 1978)

Developing an Effective Team Climate

Team climate is an internal representation of how a person perceives the conditions and relations among group members. Unfortunately this is something that the coach does not evaluate or determine it is the players on the team.

"The coach, the most powerful position on the team, has the greatest influence on establishing team climate." (Anshel)

Effective Coaches whose teams have good team climate follow certain guidelines to help, improve, and sustain this level. These guidelines help to create a positive team climate.

"Communication is one of the most important contributors to team climate and cohesion; the greater the information flow and communication the greater the cohesiveness and climate."

Factors That Most Effect Team Climate:

1. **Support:** from coaches and teammates can be especially important when the athletes optimal effort in competition does not lead to success.
2. **Pressure To Succeed:** mainly to meet the coaches expectations. The team environment may be one of pressure or too high of expectations, this can effect team climate.
3. **Recognition:** This is from coach to athlete. Recognition is very important for a child's psychological well-being. It helps to improve self- confidence, and fosters a supportive team climate.
4. **Fairness:** (is in the eye of the beholder) This means the athletes and not you. The athletes perceptions of being treated fairly must be noted because this will have a strong impact on the athlete's level of commitment, motivation, and satisfaction as a team member.

These are all very important factors especially for a young child in sports. This can determine whether or not the child will continue to participate or not.