

# YouthFirst

## Coaches Learning About Youth Sports

### The Sports Education and Leadership Program at UNLV

#### Grade 1-2 Team Cohesion

*"T.E.A.M. stands for T.ogether E.veryone A.chieves M.ore"*

*-Unknown*

Volume 1, Issue 10

### Team Cohesion Defined

Remember that old saying "There is no I in team," but what does it really mean. Team cohesion is the process of working together to achieve a common goal. This goal may be mastering a fundamental sport skill, having a good time, winning, making new friends, or some determined goal at the beginning of the season. Cohesion is built around a group identity, common goals, communication, and personal interactions. There are two types of cohesion. One type is task cohesion, which is working together to achieve a common goal. For this age level, in the sport of basketball, a goal may be to have

everyone score once during the season. The second type is social cohesion. This is the interpersonal attraction among athletes. An example would be to have everyone getting along, helping one another, and making new friendships. There are four factors that determine team cohesion. These are: environmental, personal, leadership and team factors. There is a strong relationship between team cohesion, team success and athlete satisfaction. When team cohesion decreases, performance goes down and satisfaction diminishes. So as a coach, encourage and practice team unity during practice and games.



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### Factors That Effect Team Cohesion

There are several factors that contribute to task and social cohesion. These are:

1. Athletes should be satisfied with their performance, and feel like their sport skills are improving.
2. Athletes should believe that their role on the team is important for the teams success.
3. Athletes should feel liked, made new friends, and feel excepted.
4. Athletes should work together, support each other, and accept each other.
5. Team goals, roles, rules and structures should be defined and understood by all athletes.
6. The group should be small and the atmosphere warm.
7. Athletes share blame for failure and work harder to be successful.

## How To Create Team Cohesion

Four steps have been identified in forming team cohesion. They are a constant process in which most steps are revisited constantly. As a coach, one must understand these steps to be able to develop team cohesion. The first step is forming. This is the act of putting the team together. This could be tryouts, a draft, evaluation, or the introduction and analysis on the first day. With this age level, making the athletes feel comfortable with each other, getting to know each other, and establishing communication lines would be appropriate ways to form your team. The next step is storming. This is where the athlete is trying to get the coaches attention and does a lot of showing off. Coaches start to assess the strengths and weaknesses, and begin to declare team roles. The third step is norming. This is where the team comes together and team roles are understood. For this level coaches should never set team roles in stone, and should intentionally rotate the athletes among various positions. This will encourage the athlete to experience and figure out what position they are best at and like the most. The last stage is performing. This is the end of the building process and is where all the team members work together to achieve the common team goals.

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## Team Climate

Team climate is an internal representation of how a person perceives the conditions and interrelationships among group members. The athlete hold perceptions which have an impact on each athlete's attitude on being part of the team. The coach influence's the team member satisfaction in many ways. One way is autonomy, allowing athletes to make some of the decisions. The second is providing emotional support, especially when the athletes efforts do not end with success. When a child strikes out in tee ball, encourage that child to try again with constructive, but positive feedback. Thirdly is pressuring athletes to succeed. This is measuring their improving efforts or having them match their previous efforts. This will increase the athlete's strengths, confidence and allows for more receptive critical feedback. The fifth is trust. Be fair with all your athletes and make everyone feel equally important. Be consistent and honest with what you promise. If you reward, then reward every athlete. The sixth is fairness. Remember each athlete interprets fairness in a different way. The seventh is creativity. This can be accomplished by taking risks and adding new and ex-

citing material to practice. The last way to encourage a positive team climate is cohesion. Encourage a warm, relaxed, fun, and open lines of communication climate. A positive team climate will encourage more athletes to participate and will enable the athletes to have fun while playing the sport they love.