

TRAINERMAKER

Coaching Young Athletes - The Developmental Relationships Framework

Coaches have a role to positively affect not just the physical growth of a young person, but the psycho-social growth also. A recent UKSCA article focused on Positive Youth Development (PYD) and highlighted the following coaching behaviours as being essential in the Developmental Relationships Framework:

Express Care

The coach's ability to offer understanding is central to the promotion of a caring relationship and athletes report that the emotional feeling of closeness provided by an S & C coach can be both encouraging and motivational. S & C coaches should strive to promote care for youth athlete's needs and feelings by balancing interest in their contribution and achievements with emotional support during times of challenge and disappointment.

Challenge Growth

An athlete is stretched when the S & C coach pushes them to go further and this process is best served by a coaching style that is less prescriptive and more athlete centred, placing an expectation on the youth athlete to strive to do their best and to live up to their potential. When athletes are encouraged to share goals, reflect on behaviours and helped to learn from mistakes and setbacks, relationships are stronger and increased motivation ensues.

Provide Support

The support provided by the S & C coach needs to be constant and the relationship developed in the training environment should not be influenced by performance on the field. If the S & C coach is dependable the youth athlete will learn that she/he is someone they can trust, and a positive connection will result.

Share Power

During the process of long-term athletic development, adolescence represents a period when pressure may be exerted by school, club and state. In this scenario the S & C coach can promote PYD by collaborating with the athlete to help them solve problems, respect their individual goals and include them in planning decisions.

Expand Possibilities

The expansion of possibilities is built upon a dynamic mix of relational elements that includes discussing goals, providing explanations, promoting team concept and expressing confidence in potential. Athletes report that their motivation and sense of purpose is enhanced by the planning, organisation and structure that an S & C coach can bring to their experience.