

## What Makes a Coach Successful?

Quality coaching makes a big difference in the experience that players have during the season and can have a big impact on the team outcomes at the end of the season. The many resources available to coaches beginning with the USA Hockey CEP program and other resources like the websites at [flexxcoach.com](http://flexxcoach.com), [www.postivecoach.com](http://www.postivecoach.com) and a vast number of other sites accessible on the internet. All provide quality tools for an aspiring and inquiring coach.

Although there is not one right blueprint or approach to success, quality coaches all seem to have common characteristics that are consistent regardless of coaching style. Coaches who share these seven qualities' should be very successful.

- 1) Passion for the game and competence in the knowledge base required for the level of play.
- 2) A clear understanding of the needs and desires of the players at the particular age level of the players on the team.
- 3) Strong leadership skills and emotional control that allows a coach to see the "big picture" and not get caught up in the moment of the game or other issues.
- 4) Strong communication skills. This may be the most important of all. Communicating information and knowledge to players takes effort and thought. The majority of players in this country are youth players and communicating with requires a different process than with adults. A quality coach also communicates effectively and appropriately with the parents and other adults involved with the team.
- 5) Excellent coaches build relationships that foster trust between player and coach. This takes time and effort but is critical especially with what we now call the "Millennial Generation".
- 6) The ability to redefine "winning" in such a way that the scoreboard is not the only measure of success. This requires an understanding of the skill levels you are coaching and having a plan for success that is focused on effort, learning and the development of individual skills, team skills and life lessons.
- 7) A real interest in learning and improving as a coach. Top level coaches are constantly looking for better ways to communicate their messages, connect with players, and improve as coaches and teachers.

There are a variety of coaching styles that individuals develop over many years as they see what works and what does not. As the knowledge base of a coach grows the coaching style will also evolve.

Regardless of your style, if you have these seven characteristics you are likely to become a very successful coach and positive influence on your players. Think about your style in conjunction with the seven points listed above. Getting feedback from others is also a good idea as you assess your effectiveness as a coach. Just as players are constantly striving to improve so to must coaches.

Keep your stick on the ice....