
Positive Charting

Positive Charting is simple – but not necessarily easy. It requires effort, the effort to observe. As Yogi Berra is reported to have said, “It’s amazing what you can see if you look.”

As coaches we tend to think that we add value by finding things that are done incorrectly and improving them. But it is equally important to find things that are being done correctly to reinforce them so players will continue them. Positive Charting is a method for increasing the number of “right things” that your players do. It also creates a wonderful positive atmosphere in which players are more receptive to being corrected because they feel appreciated.

Here’s how Positive Charting works:

1. Write the name of each player in a box on the Positive Charting Form. If there is a specific action you want to look for with that player (for example, hustling back on defense, blocking out for rebounds) write it in the space marked “Look-For:”
2. Look for the positive things players do. Whenever you see one, jot a note under the player’s name (over time you’ll develop your own shorthand. The key is to write enough so you’ll remember it when you get to step #6 below.) Remember to look for team-building things that players do to encourage each other as well as their physical actions.
3. Include assistant coaches, parents, and players who are sitting on the bench in the Positive Charting process. It will help them see the game in a new way.
4. Ensure you have about the same number of comments (2-5 is good) for each player. You may have to look hard with some players. Limit the number of comments for the advanced players. Be disciplined: at the end of the game you should have 2-5 items for each player.
5. Be honest. Don’t write something that is not true. This is the hard part – you have to find something positive about each player. You can do it if you look hard enough.
6. Begin your next practice with a quick team meeting by reviewing your Positive Charting with the team. Take 30 seconds for each player in turn and share the positive with the group.
7. Enjoy the positive energy of your players during practice.

An example of the power of Positive Charting from a coach in Ohio (JohnC58) posted on Amazon.com as a review of *Positive Coaching: Building Character and Self-Esteem Through Sports* by PCA founder Jim Thompson:

“...I coached a group of 13-14 year old softball players the year that I purchased this book. At the beginning of the season, the only team these girls could beat was themselves; in fact primarily the reason they were losing was the fact that they were beating themselves! Well, after one mediocre game, I sat the girls down on the bench and instead of reading them the riot act, I took to heart a suggestion by the author. I mentioned all the positive aspects of the game they played just to show these girls that they were capable of doing some positive things.

I did this after each game from then on, win or lose. Wouldn’t you know it, these same rag tag girls lost the last game of the season: the city championship game by one run (to a team that annihilated them by 12 runs in the first game of that season.) This an example of positive coaching, and I’ve used everything in this book to my advantage to become a successful POSITIVE coach. Thanks Mr. Thompson for turning my career around!”

Positive Charting is such a powerful tool it can seem like magic. Try it. You won’t regret it.



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