G4YD
GROUPS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Using the Team Environment AssessMent (TEAM) to Enhance Team Building in Sport

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What is Team Building?

Team building is recognized as one of the most prevalent and promising group-development interventions applied in sport. Coaches and practitioners use team building to promote a greater sense of unity and cohesiveness, with the goal of helping teams function more effectively. Sport researchers have developed a team building framework to guide sport coaches and practitioners in the enhancement of team cohesion.

Team Building Framework

INPUT

GROUP ENVIRONMENT
Distinctiveness
Togetherness

GROUP STRUCTURE
Role Clarity
Role Acceptance
Leadership
Group Norms
Conformity to Standards

THRUPUT

GROUP PROCESSES
Interaction & Communication
Co-operation
Goals & Objectives
Sacrifices

OUTPUT

GROUP COHESION

(Carron & Spink, 1993; Carron et al., 1997)

Team Environment AssessMent (TEAM)

The TEAM is a brief 11-item inventory that assesses the team building factors captured in the group environment, group structure, and group processes (i.e., inputs and thruputs), that have been identified as contributors to the development of cohesion in sport teams.

The TEAM can be used to:

1. target specific needs of the team (i.e., team building with a purpose)
2. monitor group dynamics after the team building activity and over the season

What did we do?

Twenty-three male athletes from a Major Junior A Ontario Hockey League (OHL) team participated in a team building intervention, which included a 1-day challenge ropes course. All athletes also completed the TEAM questionnaire at three different timepoints.

BASELINE
TEAM
Early Pre-Season

→ TEAM Scores
Analyzed to Inform
Team Building

→ TEAM BUILDING
ACTIVITY

→ POST
TEAM
Late Pre-Season

→ FOLLOW UP
TEAM & Focus Groups
1 Month Later

The questionnaire included the TEAM, and questions around both task and social cohesion. Focus groups were conducted at the follow up time point with groups of athletes and members of the coaching staff.

Results

→ Following the baseline questionnaire, role acceptance and leadership were identified as lower-scoring factors and were purposefully targeted in the team building intervention.

→ Athletes reported significant increases in the purposively targeted areas – role acceptance and leadership.

Athletes understood the importance of role acceptance, sharing that everyone on the team has a different role and these roles are all pieces of the team that complement each other: One athlete said: *"At the end of the day that's what a team is, everyone joins together and has a different role and some players' aspects of their game help other players' aspects of their game"*

Coaches felt that the ropes course placed all athletes on an even "playing field" and allowed them to be removed from their comfort zone and try something new. This allowed equal opportunity for all athletes to step up into a leadership role. An coach stated: *"I echo the same sentiment in terms of everyone is on the same playing field. Everyone had an opportunity to step up and be a leader or offer a bit of different dynamic than what might be in the dressing room at the current time, which was pretty cool to watch."*

→ Athletes' perceptions of task and social cohesion were stronger after the team building intervention.

Athletes defined team building as coming together to be "on the same page" with the same mind-set and developing stronger task cohesion. As an example, one athlete shared the following: *"Team building is supposed to help a team come closer all together, so there's no one on a different page than everyone else. So that everyone is all on the same page and when it comes to the game, we're all in the same mind-set. I think that will help the team be more successful"*.

Key Takeaways for Coaches

1. The TEAM can be used to identify areas that should be targeted in a team building intervention in order to strengthen group cohesion. (i.e., team building with a purpose).

2. The TEAM can monitor the effectiveness of team building activities and group dynamics throughout the season.

3. The TEAM is a helpful tool for practitioners to maximize the efficiency of a team building program.

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For access to the Team Environment AssessMent please scan the QR code or go to the link below!

https://g4yd.nipissingu.ca/coachs-corner/