



COACHING COMPETITORS

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April 2017



USA GYMNASTICS®

WEBINARS

Coaching Competitors in Practice

- **Practice competing:**
- Make challenges, create some discomfort
- Replicate the conditions of competition,
- Bring audience to some control practices,
- Talk about it with positive excitement , not as threat!



Teach what to do

- Focus on what is controllable: It is OK to have the goal of winning! But we must translate it into what needs to be done.
- Help the gymnast identify the right focus
- When they do a clean routine, ask about focus. Teach refocusing after a mistake (and reward it when you see it)



COMPETITION READINESS

- Make sure your gymnasts are **ready** for the competition: If they rarely do clean routines in practice, if they are too fatigued at the end of the routine, if they have been absent or ill.....they may not be ready.
- Evaluate the performance by comparing to what they do “most of the time” in practice.
- Set clear indicators of readiness for competition: # of practices, # of clean routines, physical fitness...



Coaching in Competition

- The closer to the competition, the more the feedback has to be on strengths, things they have done well, what they have (not what is missing!)
- Remind them of clean routines, good elements (Highlights Reel of the Week!)
- Convey Confidence!!!!



Control the Controllables

- **Control**

- Attitude
- Behavior
- Self-Talk
- Focus

- **No Control**

- Order of competition
- Competitors
- SCORES
- Judges



COACHING CONFIDENCE

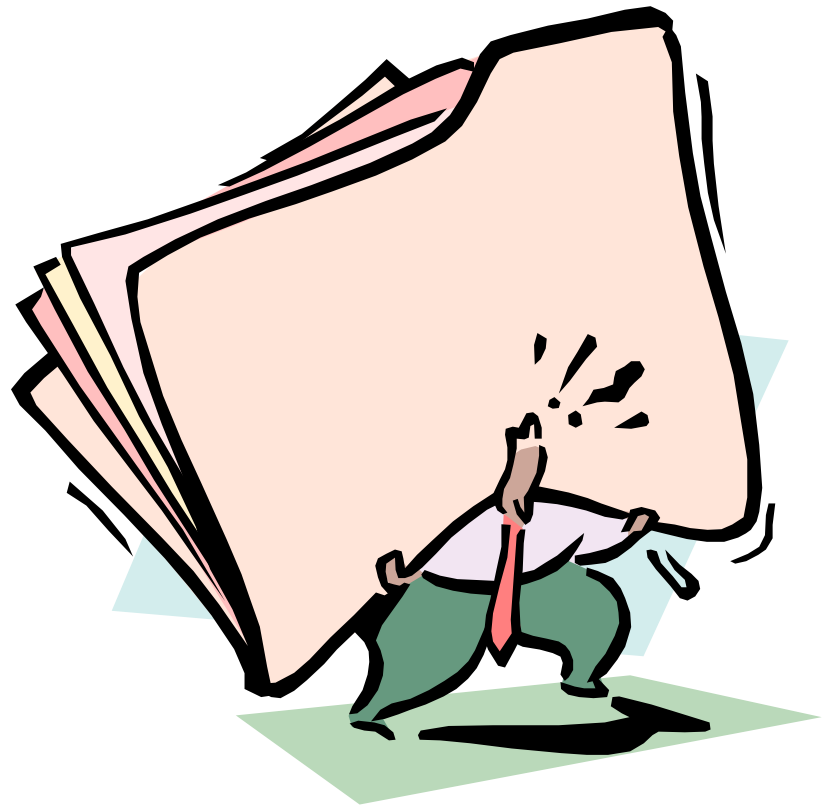
- Show confidence in them . Do you know your body language on the sidelines?
- **Be calm.** Manage your own stress
- Help your gymnasts identify what works for them: Some need to be distracted before they compete or they overthink it!
- Others need to be focused on the routine

THE STRESS OF THE COACH



The Tasks that Coaches do

- **Selecting athletes**
- **Teaching a skill**
- **Teaching to compete**
- **Managing Groups**
- **Administrating**



The people they work with



- Gymnasts
- Parents
- Asst. Coaches
- Medical/Training team
- Administration
- Judges
- Others (Media, Competitors....)

Successful Coaches

- Youth coaches passionate about sport
- Positive role models for self-control, discipline, leadership
- From negative coaching experiences they learned what NOT to do



Great Job Coach! Salmela, J., 1996

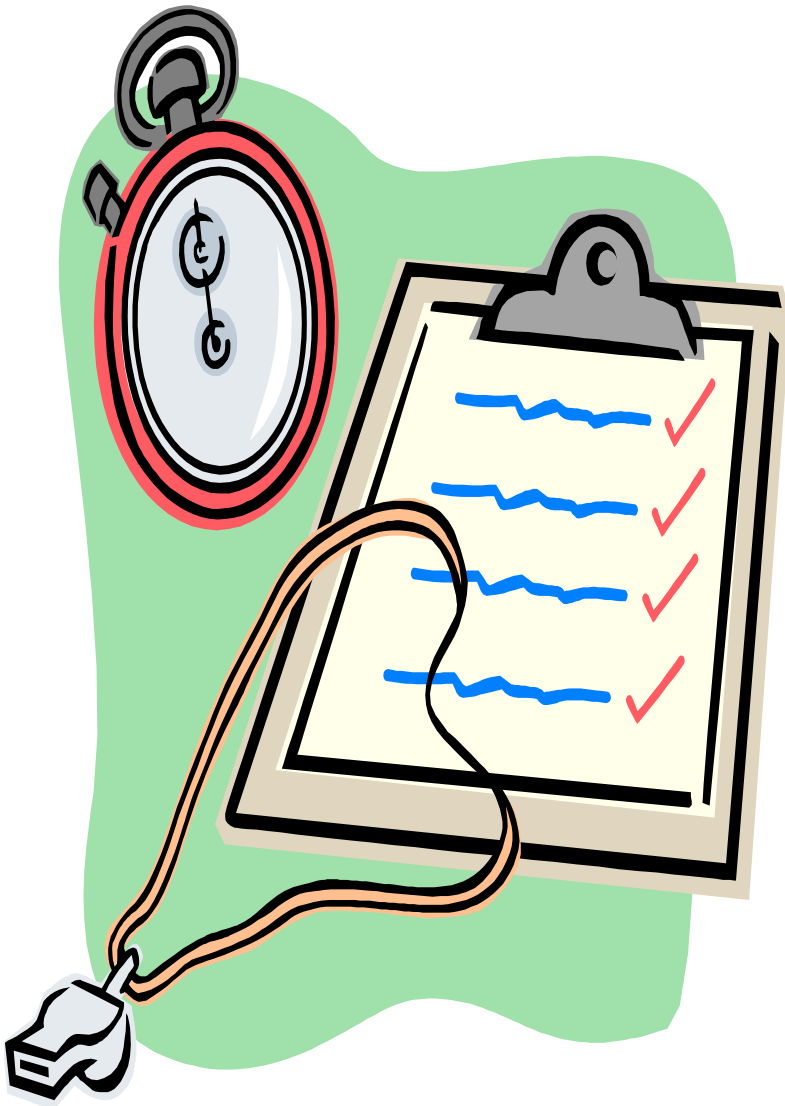
Early Coaching Career

- Awareness of impact on athletes
- Acquiring Coaching knowledge
- Learning from mistakes



Salmela, J., (96)

Staying on Top



- You never know too much
- Find your style
- Care about overall person
- Effective communication
- Positive working environment

Coaches' Own Preparation

- For practices
- For competitions (Warm-up, routines...)
- Talking to the team/athlete (knowing when NOT to say anything)



STRESSORS

- Judged on what someone else does
- Many demands with competing goals
- Long hours, travel...
- Family conflict likely
- Low self-care skills



STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR THE COACH



- **Self-awareness**
- **Support**
- **Balance within the imbalance**

Manage your Energy

- Over-stressed or under-recovered?
- Main sources of Energy:

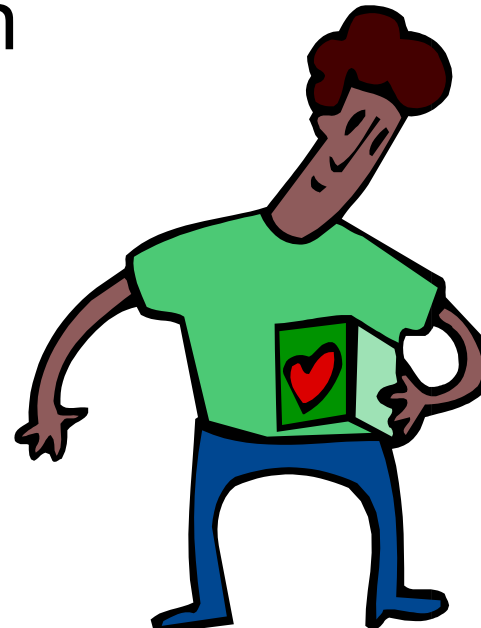
- Physical
- Emotional
- Spiritual

How/when do you
recharge?



Self-Awareness

- Your own sources of stress
- Specific responses : The weak link theory
- The power of saying “No”!
- Making your own plan





THANK YOU