

Tend the Farm

Florida Track & Field Clinic 2020

“A farm is similar to a distance team. There are lots of animals in both with different needs and levels of care on a farm or team. There are crops to tend to for the farmer; the same for the coach. Endurance is the seed, strength is the soil, and speed is the water. A coach can maintain his whole farm with these basic things.”

Joe Vigil, USA

Outline of Tend the Farm Presentation

- Introduction
- The Coach as Leader
- Team Dynamics
- Identity Factors
- Unique Activities
- Conclusion

The Team has an Identity Within a Culture of Sport

- Team sport based on independent individual performances.
- The objective is to create stars on the distance team while keeping the others happy and contributing.
- Create racing opportunities for all.
- Many animals find strength in groups.
- Positive culture builds tremendous trust among athletes.

Proven Team Dynamics

- Strengths and weakness of your team are upfront.
- Determine reasonable goals for individuals and team.
- Athletes are not afraid to fail.
- Athletes have positive attitudes.
- Performance is not confused with personality.

You are a Well-Rounded Coach

- Your passion shows.
- There is more than running here.
- Know your generational differences.
- Expand your knowledge base outside your comfort zone.
- Become a better communicator in spoken word, written word, and body language.
- Identify your professional friends and germinate the relationships in a sincere way.

Your Professional Coaching Goals Calibrate Passion

- Every professional goal must be realistic and challenging.
- Every professional goal must be quantifiable.
- Every professional goal must be within your personal control.
- Every professional goal must be adaptable to the needs of your athletes.

All Cultures Follow Rules

All rules in life must have penalties.

- Not About Running Rule.
- Performance, not Personality Rule.
- Effort, not Talent Rule.
- Success, not Winning Rule.
- Dollar Rule.
- Midnight Rule.
- Machine Rule.
- Beach Bucket Rule.

Successful Team Identity Factors

- Give them ownership.
- Allow autonomy. Let them lead activities.
- Seek leadership, not captains.
- Encourage active problem solving.
- Very structured system including studies.
- Hyper-focused on self-improvement.
- Intrinsic, not extrinsic.

Coaches are Givers

- Give them individual identity.
- Give them opportunity.
- Give them hope.
- Give them excitement.
- Give them satisfaction.
- Give them great memories.
- Give them experts.

Beyond the X's & O's

- Do what is asked of you. Touch emails/texts once.
- Over-communicate.
- Mine resources.
- Accentuate what your resources are good at, not what you lack.
- Continue to involve everybody, build your base.
- Be grateful.
- Identify and nurture your advocate.

Your Connections

- Alumni
- Financial supporters
- Fans
- Media support
- Social Media support (blogs)

Go Watch Alumni



The Reality of Performance

- Most athletes want to deliver on the big day, but few seldom do.

2017 IAAF World Outdoor Track and Field Meet

- U.S. best professional track and field athletes.
- Most important meet of the year.
- 67 open event opportunities for U.S. men.
- 4 U.S. male athletes recorded career bests.

Create Team Identity

- Sell some clothing to anybody.
- Award distinctive clothing.
- Distance backpacks and shoe bags.
- Luggage tags.
- Banners, flags, tents.
- Maintain a brand and not a slogan.
"The Machine".

Building a Culture

- Success has a covenant.
- Coaches reinforce every athlete.
- Positive behavior is recognized.
- Be optimistic and never give up.
- Be realistic, but positive.
- Never end a compliment with a "but".
- Recognize the need to have fun.
- Sell the cost of success is responsibility.

Living in the Moment

- Stories of past teams.
- Stories of friend's teams.
- Connect to other great teams.
- Convince the younger members they want this.
- Always be truthful. Do not make up stories.

Team Culture has Unique Traditions



The Paradox of Winning in Sport

- Do not apologize for wanting to win.
- Periodize winning through training.
- Act like you have won before.
- Act like you have lost before.
- Never say “but” when accepting congratulations.
- Be consistent. Live in the moment.
- Make an unforgettable and positive impression.

We All Want a Positive Team Culture (what everybody does)

- Team pasta dinners.
- Team pre-season meeting.
- Team post-season banquet.
- Current year team t-shirt.
- Team yearbook and records.
- Interesting competition schedule.
- Media and school announcements.

We All Want a Positive Team Culture (what not everybody does)

- Overnight trip to a meet.
- Social media and website.
- Post race videos.
- Parent parties.
- Organize local summer road race competition.
- Start of season TT and parent night.
- Team handbook.
- Junior high running day.
- Attend their concerts, winter sports, etc.

We All Want a Positive Team Culture (what hardly nobody does)

- Consistent summer practice.
- Summer elementary track and field camp.
- Exotic summer training trip.
- Local summer camping trip.
- Multiple seasonal overnight trips to meets.
- Emphasize and organize post-season meets.
- Parent directory.

We All Want a Positive Team Culture (what only I do)

- Take guys fly fishing.
- Take guys kayaking.
- Take guys rock-climbing.
- Attend big-time track, XC, marathon events.
- Special nights
 - Special guest speakers
 - Cooking class
 - Running shop night

Take-Home Points

- Distance running is a unique TEAM sport much like a farm.
- The coach is the multi-dimensional leader of the team.
- Be consistent and mostly predictable.
- Copy but also innovate.
- Culture is what makes a team a team. Like all historic cultures, some are short-lived while others endure the test of time.