Colonel Stas Preczewski (Coach P.), coach for the Army Crew team for the United States Military Academy at West point is right now facing a juxtaposition, he is going to take two teams to the Nationals, one with 8 high performing individuals and another one with 8 individuals performing highly as a “TEAM”. Unfortunately, the better performing team here is the Junior Varsity (JVT) and the other one is the Varsity Team (VT). With Varsity Championship as the priority at the Nationals. The question in front of Coach P is which team should represent the “Varsity Team”? In my opinion, Coach P should let JVT compete in the Varsity Championship.

“The Army Crew Team” case study starts with describing rowing as a “team” sport. It states that crew must have a clear goal in its mind. It emphasizes on how crucial it is in this sport to make a team effort rather than individual. ‘Ideal team merges individual talents and skills into one super -performing whole with capabilities that surpass those of even its most talented members’ (Harvard Management Update, 2008). This is what the VT lacks, it does have top performers with highest technical skills however doesn’t have team camaraderie. On the contrary, this is the most important weapon the JVT possesses, in Coach’s terms JVT experiences the “swing” effect, and in my opinion, is the major reason why JVT beat VT in the practices games.

Just as a leader should, Coach P. made every effort to make his teams synchronize as teams. He asked both team members to email each other on building motivation and building team spirit. Coach also tried various combinations of team members from both the teams, with the help of CEP, each time, result showed VT underperformed against JVT with 8 members on a team. I feel that Varsity Team members were having a tough time connecting emotionally with each other and had difference of opinions whereas, JVT operated as a team and had a common goal to achieve. Shared behavioral norms have proven to make a good team great (Harvard Management Update, 2008), that is what sets JVT apart and makes them competent for the Nationals as a Varsity team.

Furthermore, the result of analysis Coach P. did on both the teams based on various dimensions such as “leader, follower, optimist, pessimist etc.” categorized several team members of VT as “Team disruptors” while there were virtually none on JVT. Being a PhD holder in psychology, presumably, Coach subconsciously knows that with a team like VT, winning the Nationals is difficult. In my opinion, VT is still at storming phase and JVT, as it is evident from their performances, has reached the performing phase of team development. VT has quite a lot to learn and unlearn yet (Harvard Management Update, 2008), This process might take more than just 4 days’ time.

Clearly, VT is not ready yet to compete in the Nationals. I feel so, simply because the team members are yet to achieve resonance in their thinking. They are yet to amalgamate into one high functioning unit and set one goal for all (Harvard Management Update,2008). To handle this is to have a clear communication between the team members and understand the resistance (Groysberg, 2012). Coach P. needs to use his positional power as a coach and help these individuals identify the work areas. He should start rewarding VT’s performance as a team first than as individual members (Anne Field, 2006). While, analyzing the performance, Coach should gauge them as a team. VT already has highly skilled members they just need to build strength mentally.

As a leader, Coach should make each team member feel included, settle the differences amongst the team members, connect with them at a personal level and fine tune their performance as a team to achieve success (Groysberg, 2012). As for JVT, even though its members are not as skilled as VT’s are, JVT works in unison, is self-motivated, and just like their huddle slogan, it has “nothing to lose!”. JVT, in every right, has earned this chance to defend the Varsity title at the Nationals and it will, in my opinion, perform better than VT.

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