

Tag, You're It!

Coaches need to have a level 2 strategy for dealing with the emotions of the athletes on the team. This strategy helps to create the positive-helpful emotion of JOY and to combat the positive-harmful emotion of COMPLACENCY. Also, the spirit of the play comes alive in athletes when they experience elements of the playground at practice. The self-rewarding nature of play helps to combat unhealthy forms of extrinsic motivation and entitlement.

Overview

All team sports have the need for great cardiovascular conditioning. Sports like basketball and soccer have greater need for anaerobic conditioning. This creates the need for lots of high intensity movement (sprints and quickness) for as long as possible before rest (anaerobic) is needed. To increase the anaerobic threshold coaches must have "conditioning" periods in their practice schedule. In basketball, we commonly call this period "suicides", line-drills, 24 second drill etc. Line the players up on the baseline and run to the first free throw line and back to the baseline, then to half court and back, then to far free throw and back, and then baseline to baseline...and this is ONE suicide. Coaches do as many as needed, sometimes dribbling or touching lines as they go. Most kids dread (complacency) this time in practice but endure or grind through this. Many times players do not give maximum effort because of this complacency and coaches revert to screaming or hollering to motivate them because of the need to be in great cardiovascular shape (1st dimension). When you see this, we want to eliminate the emotion of complacency (hurts performance) and replace it with the emotion of joy.

During the conditioning period identify three athletes to be "it" (just like in tag game as a kid). On the whistle, have the rest of the players take off and start running, moving, jumping so as not to get tagged by the "its". The players must stay within the court (sidelines and baselines).

Watch how hard the athletes will run, jump, move in all different directions not to get tagged by "it." If they get tagged, the athlete has to come over and run traditional suicides on the sidelines. Watch the joy return to the faces of the athletes and watch the intensity of the conditioning period go to new heights. You can then incorporate "ball dribbling tag", half court tag, etc.

Coaches often report that they have never seen greater attitude and greater effort during their conditioning periods. Athletes rediscover the joy of running. For years, you could hear athletes asking each other before practice, "I wonder how many suicides are we doing today," with a look of drudgery. Now, they go to practice and athletes are asking the coach, "We are playing tag to day aren't we?" Conditioning goes to a new level because joy (helps performance) replaces complacency (hurts performance).

Other Resources

Check out [Running Games for Track & Field and Cross Country](#) for more fun ways to raise the level of joy through cardiovascular training.

	"To" Strategies	"Through" Strategies
2 nd Dimension		
Motivation		✓
Confidence		
Emotions		✓

Team Cohesion		
Goal Setting		
3rd Dimension		
Identity		
Character		
Significance		
Self-Worth		
Values		
Purpose		

*Because many 3D strategies have multiple level 2 & 3 implications, these checkmarks do not likely display their full scope of impact. We have tried to limit the number of checkmarks to the most obvious applications to make the planning process easier.

When will this strategy be executed?

☐ Pre-Season ☐ In-Season ☐ Post-Season ☐ Off-Season

Notes: