

Coaching the Z's: Secrets for Training Your Staff to Win on the Field with the Z's

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Who is Generation Z?

- Born between Generation Z born 1995 to 2015 (Millennials born 1980 to 1995.)
- Influenced by significant sociocultural and economic events: (9/11 attacks, 2008 global recession, and the first African-American President elected)
- Gen Z's shorter attention spans because of technology, about 8 seconds
- The most protected and safest generation
- Growing up more slowly
- Grew up in unstable times; looking for stability
- Think sports is a key to a good education, however Gen Z sees sports more as a health tool not play.
- Will not tolerate mistreatment or discrimination, especially group punishment.
- 61 million strong

- **Gen Z in Your Huddle**

	They crave constant and quick feedback
	Preoccupation with social media and smartphones (Gould, Nalepa, Mignana)
	Poor in-person communication skills (Gould, Nalepa, Mignana)
	Need for frequent (positive) feedback
	Lack of independence, entitlement and ungratefulness (Gould, Nalepa, Mignana)
	Difficulties dealing with adversity (Gould, Nalepa, Mignana)
	Highest generational marks of depression, anxiety, and loneliness.
	Gen Z is all about personal success (Gould, Nalepa, Mignana)

How Should You Coach Gen Z?

(Journal of Coaching Education, The Preferred Coaching Styles of Generation Z Athletes: A Qualitative Study)

- Good communication is the key, don't yell and you should remain calm.
- Be positive and encouraging and let them know you care about them as a person.
- Know your sport.
- Involve team in the decision-making process
- Listen to what they have to say to gain their trust
- Set clear expectations for practice, behavior and engagement
- Ask open-ended questions to facilitate feedback and give athletes a voice
- Teach the skills needed to deal with adversity, like losses and setbacks
- Explain why drills and activities are being done, while keeping instructional strategies as brief as possible
- Provide choices and responsibilities for athletes (such as being on time, practicing alone), and as coaches, hold athletes accountable
- Use technology to provide visual aids and use texting primarily for logistical communication

How to coach Gen Z for best results?

[\(https://appliedsportpsych.org/blog/2019/03/coaching-generation-z-athletes/](https://appliedsportpsych.org/blog/2019/03/coaching-generation-z-athletes/)

1. Explain the 'Why.'

- A. Athletes expect adults to have done their homework.
- B. Provide quick rationale for skill development and training methods.
- C. Spend time developing quality practice plans.
- D. Be prepared

2. Communicate Effectively.

- A. Ask open-ended questions
- B. Practice face-to-face conversations in team meetings.
- C. Use text messaging only for logistical communication.
- D. Switch up the method of communications (i.e., videos, articles, and demonstrations)

3. Be Direct.

- A. Make messages more direct at the start and end of training sessions and during pre-game or half-time speeches.

4. Focus on Quality Over Quantity.

- A. Watch for overtraining and burnout symptoms.
- B. using periodization principles when scheduling training and competitions.
- C. Have a hit count or throw count.

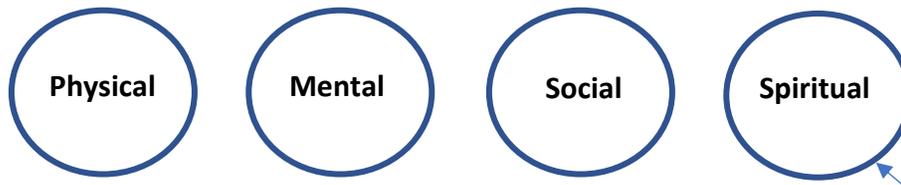
5. Build Independence.

- A. More dependent on significant adults than any other cohort in history.
- B. By giving athletes some autonomy, choice, and responsibility, coaches and support staff can give them more ownership and develop skills related to independence

6. Promote Resiliency.

- A. Gen Z have heightened difficulties dealing with adversity.
- B. Creating pressure and challenging situations in training, along with teaching appropriate coping strategies

#1 Secret – Fill the Circles



We added

Secret #2 Get to know your players - DISC

- Part of the NCAA recruiting process: <http://www.ncaa.org/disc-behavioral-assessments>
- Helps coaches and teams communicate more effectively and efficiently.
 - D- Dominant, like to be the leaders in front.
 - I – Influencer, highly spirited team leader
 - S- Steady, good team player, goes along with the flow
 - C – Conscientious, very analytical

Secret #3 Build a Team Around Your Strengths – StrengthFinders

Done in businesses and college academic department as well as athletic programs.
Increase retention on college campus.

Four domains:

- A. Executing
- B. Influencing
- C. Relationship Building
- D. Strategic Thinking

Nugget: Research by StrengthFinders shows that followers want the following from their leaders:

1. Trust
2. Compassion
3. Stability
4. Hope

#3 Secret - Know How to Motivate

(Dan Pink, the Puzzle of Motivation, Ted Talks)

1. Autonomy
 - Don't micromanage
 - The controlling coach is a dinosaur and a bully (new Indiana anti-bulling law)
2. Mastery
 - a. Physical – skills set, physical conditioning, injury rehab, injury prevention
 - b. Mental – football IQ, know your team, SWOT
 - c. Social – culture of your program, chemistry, commitment, norms of program
 - d. Spiritual – positive energy of team, everyone has value
3. Purpose
 - Have goals that scare you – like NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

Secret #4 Look for the Good

1. A winning positive attitude is contagious,
2. The energy is contagious,
3. The fun on the field is contagious.
4. Selling them on of process is important.
5. Find something that the team is doing better now than last week.
 - **Performance Goals** get you to Outcome Goals.