

## THERE'S NO "I" IN "TEAM" (BUT THERE IS A "ME")

### What Makes Great Teams Great?

The first historical record of the field of sport psychology occurred in 1898, when a man named Norman Triplett noticed that people cycle faster when riding with other people. Over a century later, that single insight has grown into a thriving field of theory and practice.

Recently, after running a 5k race at the Avenue of the Giants in Northern California, I remarked to a colleague that the setting (mile after mile of solitude among the redwoods) would be great for my first marathon. But he, having run several marathons himself, quickly dismissed the idea. "You'd be better off to run a marathon in a city, where spectators encourage you the whole way." So even in individual sports, the concept of team or, at least, other people comes into play in a big way.

Of course, that importance is infinitely more important in team sports. In the United States, the 2000s has been the era of the professional *team* champions: the Patriots in NFL, the Pistons in the NBA, and teams other than the Yankees in MLB. (In MLS, however, it's pretty much been whoever has Landon Donovan) And in European soccer, the high-payroll, superstar teams like Real Madrid and Manchester United have won only a few trophies in the new millennium. And last year's Champion's League final saw underdog Liverpool win in a stunning comeback over a highly regarded AC Milan.

So having the highest payroll and superior talent is not all it takes to build a successful team. Obviously, talent is important to success, but to say it is the only thing you need would be naive. Having strong team cohesion can help increase motivation, focus, work rate, and of course, fun.

### 5 keys to having a cohesive and successful team:

**1 – Goals** - Goal setting has been consistently proven to be the most effective of the sport psychology techniques. In the September '05 edition of Kicker, I outlined SMART goals for individual players. Team goals are equally as important. Coaches should make sure to get input from his or her players and set team goals accordingly. Well set goals can keep a team motivated and on the same page.

**2 – Leadership** – Great team have great leaders. Leaders set the atmosphere and help create, based on the players, a team identity. While the coach is generally the leader of the team, a sport like soccer demands that players lead, too. Coaches should work with their players not only to develop technical ability, tactical awareness, and fitness, but leadership skills as well.

**3 – Communication** - Communication, both on and off the field, both verbal and non-verbal, are essential for a successful team. Communication from coach to player, as well as player to player should be: a) positive and b) contain information and direction. For instance: "Hey! Quit dribbling!!" is neither. It is negative not in the sense of being mean-spirited, but in the sense of telling a player what not to do, but not informing them of the more appropriate alternative. Something like: "Play me square to feet!" gives positive and directive information.

**4 – Respect and trust** – Both of these crucial elements are earned over time. Hard work, dedication, improvement, skill, and personality are some of the key traits in gaining respect. Players and coaches should be aware of how their actions can impact their teammates individually and the team as a whole.

**5 – Roles** – Players and coaches must know their strengths and weaknesses and how they fit into the team structure. The old saying is that there is no "I" in "team." And this is generally true, but in team sports, and especially in soccer, there must be room for the individual to shine within that team structure. Coaches can help players by letting them know their

Check out our online calendar for important dates and fundraisers.

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expectations of each players' role (how their individual talents can be of most benefit to the team and its success).

In soccer, the team and the individual go hand in hand. When a player improves, there is a better chance the team will improve. When the team improves, there is more room for the individuals on the team to improve. And so on. So although there is no "I" in "team" as the saying goes, there is a "me." And if the "me" wants to get better and be successful, "me" does everything possible to make the team better too.

*Brian Baxter holds a Master's Degree in Sport Psychology from John F. Kennedy University, has a USSF C License, and has been on the CYSA Coaching Staff. He lives in Portland, OR and has a private practice working with individuals, teams, coaches, and referees. He can be reached by email at [brian@baxtersports.com](mailto:brian@baxtersports.com) or by phone at (510) 459-8313. For more information, go to <http://www.baxtersports.com>*



## 24-7 UK SOCCER ACADEMY SUMMER TRAINING CAMPS

These camps run from Monday through Friday and will be broken down to include technical sessions (with a different topic worked on each day), fun games, quizzes, and skills testing using our very own 24/7 USA Soccer Skills Challenge. To add to the fun there will be themed days including, wacky hair day, crazy shirt day, pizza day as well as many other fun activities.

### Summer soccer camps fall into 3 categories:

- Mini-Dribblers – 5-7 year olds, 8.30am-10.00am, \$59
- Half-Day- 8-16 year olds, 8.30am-12.00am, \$99
- Full-Day – 8-16 year olds, 8.30am – 3.00pm, \$149

### Sign up for 3 summer camps for the price of 2!

All camps to take place at Canyon Middle School (Subject to change)

- Monday 24th - Friday 28th July
- Monday 7th - Friday 11th August
- Monday 21st - Friday 25th August

### EARLY DROP OFF TIME:

**Need to get to work in the morning? There will be staff members present from 8am so drop you're kids off and we'll look after them until the course starts.**

All children that attend the Summer Camps will receive a certificate of attendance and a gift.

For more information please visit our website at [www.24-7uksocceracademy.com](http://www.24-7uksocceracademy.com)  
Any questions then contact Andy Hulbert at 510-861-3916 or email [andy@24-7uksocceracademy.com](mailto:andy@24-7uksocceracademy.com)