

Coaching with a clear Handball Vision

After a first article about the Dutch Handball Vision from Sjors Röttger hereby a second article about the role of the coach within the Dutch handball vision.

The Dutch Handball Vision

After several years of taking ideas from foreign handball coaches from major handball countries, we realized that we sometimes copied their work.

There is nothing wrong with this, we have learned a lot from them, but we are Dutch, we responded sometimes strange to the ideas of those (good) coaches.

We wanted to learn from the past and other countries, but also decided that we want to play the handball game: "Our way".

Education

Within the Dutch Handball Association, we use the Dutch Handball Vision(*). Recognition therein is an important point. A number of countries from a shared handball vision have been very successful. Within the Dutch Handball Vision educating is an important pillar. It is a common thread in the training of talents. Our way of playing is the basis from which we will train. Most important is not only implemented the Handball Vision in the training of talents but also in educating coaches.



The new modern Dutch coach

‘When coaches do what they always have done they will get what they will receive what they always have’ is a saying in our country. This saying was and is important: it is difficult to

change your trainer/coach behaviour. In our country the trainer/coach behaviour was/is directive: tell them what to do during training and during the handball game was/is normal.

- Still a big task inside our federation is to change this way of training and coaching.

So it is important to know how we train our talents and what will be our vision for trainers and coaches.

If we want to be successful with our Handball Vision we need a new type of coach was one of our ideas. We do not need a coach who is yelling and shouting! The coach is part of the team, he has to manage the team, he is not 'THE' boss, he or she is the helper who asks a lot of questions.

How looks the new way?

We need a coach who is more asking then telling. From tactical always telling how to play to let the players decide more and more. This will result in greater participation by players. We need trainers who are going to let players find their own solutions in certain exercises. Instead of telling the way to play during games give them a certain time and responsibility to find out their own tactical solutions. This takes time but can be done!



For example you can let players during training think about solutions how to play against their next opponent. You can ask them – for example - before the match to prepare goal and

tactical instructions on attack and defence. Furthermore you can ask them in half time about the positive points.

Especially while playing practice matches you can give the players more responsibility. We like to educate our players wide and that also means talk with the players about game strategy; how we play; why we play; what we play. During half time and after the game strategy and goals are discussed and examined whether this is achieved. Points for improvements will be included in the upcoming trainings. Players must be addressed from the group about their positive and negative actions. Players must learn to give their opinion about the other players behaviour in our outside the field and learn that it is not towards the person itself but towards the handball player. Give players the space to interfere in the program. What do the players/team want to learn etc.? For example you can start working with a players council representing the team and will act on behalf of the team as an interlocutor.

Coaching is a profession. A coach develops training programs, taking tactical decisions and brings the art of the game on his players. An excelling coach is more than that. The coach is above all an inspiration and mentor. The coach knows him(her)self and the players. The coach always gives his athletes what they need and can thus make the difference between win and loss. The coach is looking beyond the horizon and is constantly willing to learn. The excelling coach picks up where his colleagues call it a day.



The coach sets goals for himself and the players. Goals need to be challenging, achievable, verifiable and auditable. The coach set goals over time as well as competition goals; not talking about outcome targets because no one has the outcome of a match under control.

Let players set their own goals, let them reflect on their own commitment and perseverance, let them experience what they can and what they can not yet do. Create a fun sport environment where they feel seen and heard.

The coach lays down some of the responsibilities with the players/team. Not only during training and competition but also beyond. How are players dealing with outside influences? How do players behave towards fellow players, referees, public, media, etc.? All of these factors are important in the development of a player.

Making mistakes is OK!

The coach guided his players, gives them instructions and feedback, but let them above all make mistakes. The coach has an exemplary behaviour – for example - towards referees. The coach opts for open communication and would like to work together. The coach tries to stay calm in every situation.

Communication between trainer / coach and player remains a topical issue in the sport. Effective communication is apparently not so simple. Each handball player is an unique individual and each team is different. The circumstances in which is to be performed may be different or better still be experienced differently by different persons. Important job of a coach is to coach his handball players at the right time to achieve maximum performance. This is possible when you know your handball players well. Customized advice can be given. Then you can fully appreciate what evidence your handball player at one time can be best motivated.

Listening is really important! By really listening the coach is focused on the player who wants to say something, so that the player gets the opportunity and encouraged to say what really concerns him. A coach who has these skills will be able to store faster and more thorough information that is extremely useful for optimum performance of the player and optimal efficiency of the team.

To become a better trainer / coach but also to become a better player you have to look for the right balance. You have to let players know what you expect from them and make arrangements on practical matters. Make also arrangements about the fellowship. Do not forget the parents! Speak to each other in time if limits are exceeded. As trainer / coach you have to be a good example. Always make sure that you check your agreements and live up to them. Be honest if you can not!

You inspire, stimulate, compliment and emphasize what is going well. Making mistakes is allowed. You have to give compliments to the individual players and then talk about points of improvement. Do not put too much emphasis on what is not going well.

Show interest in every player, not only handball but also in school etc. Try to give players instructions on their own level. Let players help each other and let them learn from each other. Ask open questions to players, give less instructions, explanation and advice. Let players think about their next step in development. Give compliments about choices players make and the responsibility they take.



My vision about me as a coach

Supervising development athletes

As a coach I am able to guide an athlete in all areas. A coach must accompany the player in his career to professional player. Only providing training and coaching games is certainly not sufficient. I need to prepare the player for what is coming and also on what is not going to come. Most of the players I work with want to be a professional player. Unfortunately a professional career is not for everyone. Therefore the player must have something to fall back on. I think the combination of sport and education as important. Each player must have a diploma.

You can ask players to make a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and an Individual Training Plan (IDP). Besides the daily supervision I evaluate two or three times a year with the players our five pillars (technical, tactical, physical, mental and social). During this conversation, I also talk with the players about their learning/work and personal situation. I also think it very important that players think about ambition, qualities, challenges, etc. Here I try to also accompany the players. What does the player have to do (or perhaps leave) to achieve this ambition. One way to find out is the use of a questionnaire filled in by the players. In addition, players can enter a weekly schedule, which they should mention all; from training to education / work, from internships to visiting friends, family, etc.

When you work with young players you should also involve parents in the process. Parents play an important role. I try to keep them informed as much as possible about the development of their child. From experience I have noticed that communication is very important.

Team behind the team

This team consists of two trainers, two physical trainers, a doctor, two physiotherapists, a tutor, a sports psychologist. Each member of this team is responsible for his / her part in the team.

Sport Technical Program

Handball training

The players train appr. 14 hours per week. In addition to that, they play in competition. With this program, the first step towards professionalization has been made.

Physical training

The physical training is tailored to the individual. It involves moving the base of as functional as possible. It starts with a good core stability and overall strength. The physical training is given by professionals (Total Movement). Communication with the trainers, physical trainers and medical staff is very important. Evaluation provides a good program.

Performance Diagnostics

About three times a year we do some physical tests. These tests are collected by the physical trainers. They discuss the results with trainers and players.

Communication medical staff

Communication between physiotherapists and trainers (handball and physically) is very important. When a player has suffered an injury we together carry it out rehabilitation program.

Sports psychologist

Together with the sports psychologist we discuss a number of topics which are important to get the most out of the players. Topics are: the personal development of players, the mapping of the motives of players, team meetings and a survey of the physical and mental rehabilitation of players properly. We also have to give the players the opportunity to get individual guidance.

THE PLAYER STAYS ALWAYS CENTRAL IN HIS/HER DEVELOPMENT!

() The Dutch Handball Vision is written by Ton van Linder, Bert Bouwer, Henk Groener and Sjors Röttger. They needed two years to discuss and come to a document of 67 pages.*