

A MESSAGE TO COACHES

Beware of Burnout

By Dr. Morton Tener

Have you lost the enthusiasm you once had? Does your coaching have meaning? Do your assistants get on your nerves? Are you out of touch with new coaching strategies? Are you failing to meet the expectations of the players and parents? If your answer is yes to any of the above, you may be a victim of burnout.

Burnout may exist on one of three levels: Burnout on the individual level can be attributed to a lack of anticipated success "on the playing field." Interpersonal burnout can be a result of poor player relations, lack of staff competence and negative fan perception. Institutional contribution to burnout may be a result of not meeting league expectations or lack of community support.



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In order to determine your stage of burnout, honest self-appraisal must be applied by asking yourself the following questions:

1. What are my objectives? Am I reaching them? Are they unrealistic? Do I need another challenge?
2. What part of my coaching responsibilities do I enjoy? Recruiting players? Developing game strategies? Conducting practices? Coaching in game situations?
3. Am I an imaginative and creative coach, and can I respond to new situations?
4. Do I blame others for my lack of success?
5. Do I follow through with valid recommendations and plans developed by my assistants?

Suppose the answer to many of the above questions is not positive. How do you turn negative indicators into successful results? Some suggestions include:

1. Study material by experts in coaching, sports management and psychology.
2. Attend coaching clinics and leadership conferences.
3. Compare your objectives and programs to that of more successful coaches.
4. Solicit post-season reactions from a variety of sources.
5. Develop specific, realistic goals before beginning each new season.
6. Realize that tribulations and pressures are part of the coach's job.
7. Maximize player performance by providing consistent direction, motivation and evaluation.
8. Realize that you cannot satisfy all parties all of the time and that you will be successful in some cases and not in others.
9. Be positive. Approach new seasons with the expectation that it will be rewarding and winning, regardless of the stats.
10. Try to be innovative. There are creative ways to make program changes and stay within league policies.
11. In order to make changes, you must be willing to change yourself.
12. Keep a good self-image.
13. Stand up for your convictions only after reviewing all the circumstances of a situation and you believe you are right.
14. Maintain a positive public image.
15. Let people know that self-reward is not your only motive. The success of your players and the community are your most important goals.

If you cannot accommodate many of the above recommendation, I suggest you quit while you are not too far behind.

