

Assignment

Athlete Interviews: How does coach feedback impact the athlete experience?

Purpose

Great coaches recognize more than performance—they notice effort, improvement, resilience, leadership, and character. This assignment will help you understand how coach feedback shapes an athlete's confidence, motivation, growth and long-term enjoyment.

Learning Objectives

- Analyze how coach recognition of effort, improvement, and personal growth influences athletes' confidence, motivation, enjoyment, and long-term participation in sport.
- Compare and contrast the experiences of two athletes with different competitive backgrounds, skill levels, or sport journeys to understand how coaching behaviors shape the athlete experience.
- Evaluate the impact of coach feedback, communication, and recognition on athletes' perceptions of success and personal development.
- Develop an intentional coaching philosophy that prioritizes recognizing effort and improvement.

Assignment

Interview two athletes whose sport experiences are different. Consider interviewing athletes who vary in one or more of the following ways:

- Competitive level (recreational, school, club, collegiate)
- Skill or success level
- Years of participation
- Love of sport (someone who continues to love sport and someone who left or nearly left)

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your sport journey.
2. Describe a coach who made you feel valued. What did they do?
3. What types of feedback motivated you the most?
4. Can you remember a time when a coach recognized your effort or improvement instead of the outcome? How did that make you feel?
5. Did you ever feel overlooked because you weren't the strongest athlete? If so, what impact did that have?
6. What did your best coach consistently notice about you besides your performance?
7. Did coach recognition influence your confidence or desire to continue playing? How?
8. If you could give one piece of advice to future coaches, what would it be?

Reflection & Comparison

Write a 2–3 page reflection comparing the two athletes' experiences.

Address the following:

- What similarities and differences did you notice?
- How did coach recognition (or lack of recognition) influence each athlete's confidence, motivation, growth and enjoyment?
- Did the athletes value different types of recognition based on their competitive level or success?
- What surprised you most?
- What did you learn about recognizing effort and improvement?
- How will these interviews influence the way you coach or teach in the future?

Final Reflection

How will you intentionally ensure every athlete, not just your top performers, feel seen, valued, and recognized for their effort, growth, and contribution? Include three specific coaching strategies you will use.