

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Book reviews

Winning Ways of Women Coaches

Editor: Cecille Raynaud

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After a truly prestigious career in coaching and several other books - of which the most known is *The Volleyball Coaching Bible* volume I (2002, in collaboration) and II (2015) - Cecile Raynaud, PhD, has now launched a new one entitled *Winning Ways of Women Coaches*. It is a volume of the same kind as *She can coach* (2004), and to which - also like in that case - have contributed other 20 colleagues; some of the exceptional women coaches in the world coming from 15 different sports and several countries. A really fruitful collaboration which resulted in the most comprehensive resource for actual and future women coaches. A resource which appears just before June 2022, the month that “marks the 50th anniversary of the passing of Title IX, the federal civil rights law that gave women equal opportunity to play and opened the door for women’s sports to take root and grow in America”.

Within this new book the respective contributors present some very personal, unique stories, insights and advices, but at the same time all of them highlight the fact that regardless of the fact that they had led teams or individuals to national, world and Olympic championship, or been a pioneer in profession, at the college level, far more important than coaching their sport was how they communicated with, cared for, and developed their

athletes. Even if such a perspective cannot be considered exclusively specific to women coaching, the emphasis the authors placed on it make the readers to think that it could be a particularity of the new era of women in coaching we have entered in. An era when they have not only broken coaching barriers, but also established new standards of excellence in the profession. On the other hand, taking into consideration that irrespective of sport or level of performance nowadays the culture is viewed as one of the key factors in coaching success, every author teaches us how to proceed for creating and implementing the most stimulating culture of her team and/or program.

The content of this new “Bible of women coaching” is distributed into 20 chapters and three parts; the parts, being dedicated to coaching career path, program development and management, as well as athlete engagement and growth.

The volume starts with a somehow intriguing story - that of the so well known Valorie Kondos Field – who teaches us that you can become an elite gymnastics coach without ever having competed as a gymnast. And that for succeeding the essential step is in fact “to discover your why”; because then all is about the ability to work with people and make them to trust in and follow you. Otherwise, all those thinking to be involved in sport must understand that in this activity you have “to win with humility and lose with grace”, as also to permanently be guided by the courage; a quality which expresses through “taking steps toward a goal without any guarantee of a benefic result”.

The next three chapters focus on getting and performing within different positions - because it is OK to move between various positions and back again - and on how all roles can be interesting and beneficial from the perspective of a successful career in coaching. Of course, all without neglecting your family interests and life (Ch. 5), and to manage your progress and personal development (Ch. 6).

Working well with administrators, i.e. building and maintaining a positive relationship with them, is another important aspect of a coach job (Ch.7), but much more essential is to build and sustain a winning program (Ch. 8). It is the opinion of another very good volleyball coach, who firmly believes that a coach has to focus on more than the sport skills training, because only by adding other things to improve the players experience the program will finally become one of a real and lasting success.

Establishing a high performance culture (Ch. 9) is also crucial, as “the team culture will make or break a coach’s program”, while developing and implementing an adequate strategy for the overall program (Ch. 10) will decisively contribute to the final success. Other aspects

approached within the second part refer to the recruiting criteria when building a staff (Ch.11), whose activity need to very rigorously be planned and scheduled (Ch.12), and to the most efficient tips the coach can use for “selling” his/her team program through media (Ch.13).

How to recruit the athletes is presented within the first chapter of the last part (14), with the next one speaking about the clear definition and adjustment of each team component roles. Once this operation is completed it is the responsibility, interest and intelligence of each athlete to figure out how they are going to help the mission the team is trying to accomplish. Other three sequences help the coaches learn how to communicate clearly with the athletes (Ch. 16), to combine the strong voice with giving

them the opportunities to be involved in decisions (17), and to strengthen the coach-athlete relationship, in the attempt to transform the group into a large family (18).

As the people of a team are much more than simply athletes, they have to be grown holistically; this being possible only if the coach is prepared to be creative and have real-world discussions with them (Ch.19), and if he/she is capable and insistent in keeping it fun while instilling the values (Ch. 20), fun being a component often neglected or even forgotten by some coaches, unfortunately.

Gheorghe Dumitru
ghdumitru@yahoo.com