Guided Discovery is a teaching method that emphasizes learning through the decision making of the individual. The coach has the solution to the problem already in his mind. He then works backward by asking open-ended questions of the athlete with the goal being to have the player arrive at the solution on his or her own (Cassidy, Jones, Potrac, 2009). This solution can be realized based on the athlete’s prior experiences or through their deductive reasoning. This method aids in creating strong leaders by virtue of their decision-making and problem solving i.e. challenging a player’s cognitive ability (Cassidy et al., 2009). One potential hazard of Guided Discovery is that the coach may not be viewed as the authority on their particular sport. A player may wonder, “why is he or she asking me this question?” or “they are the coaches, shouldn’t they know the answer?” To overcome these objections, a coach may have to explain to players his or her rationale when employing Guided Discovery. There are numerous teaching methods available to a coach, and a one-size-fits-all approach should not be utilized. Rather, a combination of methods based on particular athlete learning characteristics may be better suited for development. As Janssen, Westbroek, and van Driel (2014) conclude, “Although teachers generally subscribe the merit of GDL, it is still rarely realised in practice. Similar to many innovative teaching approaches, GDL is primarily geared at optimizing student learning rather than being practical for teachers to implement in class” (p. 86).

An example of using Guided Discovery with my high school girls’ basketball team would be as follows. We have a set play in our half-court offense that involves the wing player setting a ball screen for the point guard. Ideally, it should produce a lay-up or a pick and roll situation. I have noticed certain teams may make an adjustment and either switch on the screen, or both defenders will sag off into the lane. I have a wing player who is a reasonably efficient three-point shooter. I asked her what she would do if the defense switches or drops off upon her setting the screen. She responded with roll to the basket. I asked her if that was not available is there another option? She said she did not. So, I then asked her if she considered herself a fairly reliable three-point threat. She said, most of the time. I responded by asking her how she thought she could incorporate three-point shooting into the situation we just discussed. She finally said, by looking for open space behind the three-point arc i.e. a pick and pop. We then reviewed film (visual), and I continued to ask her questions to make sure she knew how to decide if she should roll or pop. My answer all along was pick and pop, and by guiding her through the process she was able to arrive at that same conclusion on her own. As Ermeling (2012) states in his research on legendary basketball coach John Wooden, “Wooden’s example provides a unifying and compelling illustration of the potential of the inquiry-based approach for any pedagogical context” (p. 206).

References

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