



COACH	
Skill	CONFIDENCE
Lesson	FOCUS ON CONTROLLABLES

Why:

When athletes are experiencing higher frustration it's often because they are focused on things that are beyond their control. Things like their opponent, environmental conditions, coaches decisions, comments from parents/observers, etc. Help your athletes learn how to identify the difference between what they can/can't control and put their energy toward maximizing their controllables. You will help them increase motivation and build confidence!

Objective:

Train the mental muscle to FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL. Benefits:

- Lowered anxiety, nerves
- Realistic expectations that lead to attainable results
- Focus on process (how you are doing it), not the outcome (result)
- Learn to identify what is truly in an athlete's control

Activity:

This exercise can be completed multiple times for specific situations and/or for more general situations. Think of something specific you want your athletes to improve on - here are some examples:

- Making the most of your scoring chances
 - Maintaining possession receiving or passing
 - Communication in and out of competition
 - Accepting and/or responding to feedback or challenges
1. Start by talking with your athletes about the importance of focusing on 'controllables'. Next, have them come up with an area of their performance they would like to improve (you can do this individually or in small groups to work together)
 2. Print out the next page and give a copy to each athlete (or simply have them draw a circle on a sheet of paper). Guide them through the following exercise:

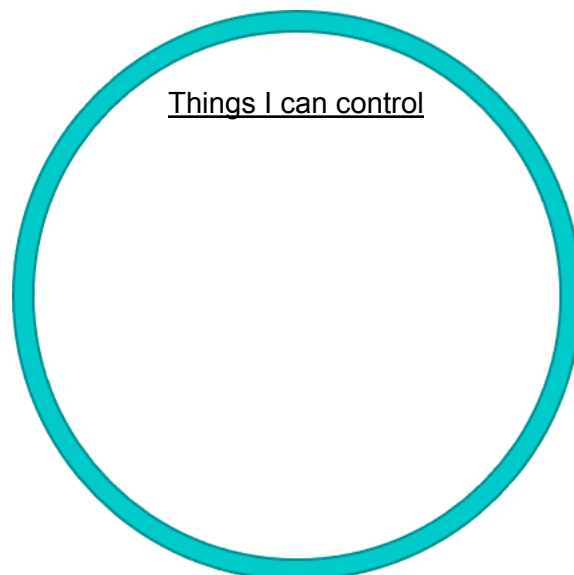
Step 1

Think about anything/anyone that influences your ability to complete your task successfully. These can include your thoughts or actions, what other people say or do, environmental conditions (the field, weather, change in coaches), etc... These can be both POSITIVE and NEGATIVE influences. List those below:

Step 2

Using the diagram below insert items from your previous list as follows:

- Inside the circle - things that are completely or mostly in your control
 - Example: Self-talk, internal dialogue
- Outside the circle - things that are not in your control
 - Example: The quality of your competition



3. Lead a discussion on what athletes have identified in and out of the circle.
 - Make sure anything inside the circle is something they have COMPLETE control over. There should be a lot more on the outside than on the inside!
 - Encourage and be ready for some debate over what is controllable!
 - Within the discussion talk about why a focus on the non-controllables hinders their performance

Core of the Lesson:

- ★ **The only things that are truly under your control are your ATTITUDE & EFFORT.**
Everything inside the circle should relate back to those two areas.

- ★ You can't control what others say or do, but **you CAN CONTROL how you prepare and/or respond**

Additional ways to continue the discussion:

1. Have them specify what good behaviors/actions they can control for positive attitude and optimal effort.
2. Have the team come up with 3-5 'controllables' that they will commit to in training and competition.
3. Ask them to identify a challenge outside of their athletic experience and repeat this activity (ex: school, conflicts with friends, a family issue, etc)
4. You can apply this activity to virtually everything - the more you do it the clearer what is truly controllable will be and the ability to break that down becomes more of a habit

Extra Point:

Look for patterns - If a majority of your athletes identify the same thing(s) as negative influences (negativity among teammates, comments from parents/observers, feeling overly pressured) you may want to explore that more deeply. AND if you have the ability to change or improve it then take action!

Session Set-up:

- Best in a classroom type setting but can be done on the field/court
- If in a classroom use a dry erase board and have athletes record responses there too
- Each athlete needs something to write with and on to record their own responses
- Make it a judgment free zone - you want open and honest discussion!

Questions or comments about the session? Or want more?

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