

Topic: Coaching Cues

Link: https://coachreed.com/podcast/coachingcode/the_c0ach1ng_c0de-ep11-swinging-toward-fences/

- **Definition of a coaching cue:** A piece of information (usually task-oriented) that will help an athlete accomplish a skill. Typically, a cue “shortcuts” a complex and difficult movement or skill using a simple directive.
- **Note:** Traditional technique coaching typically breaks down and teaches each individual aspect of the technique--Transfer weight between feet, rotate hips, roll your wrists, etc. This--having to focus on all these aspects at once--can be overwhelming for an athlete. Therefore, a coach can use a simple yet descriptive cue that creates visual imagery for the athlete and helps him/her execute the technique.
- **Three types of coaching cues:**
 - **Internal:** Focusing body movements associated with the skill. Almost always emphasizing a body part.
 - “Bend at the knee”
 - “Drive the foot”
 - Thought to be disruptive to the athlete as he/she tries to execute natural body movements
 - **External:** Focuses on the outcome. Tries to help athlete think of the outcome, or what happens when the skill is completed.
 - “Jump to the ceiling”
 - “Drive the laces to the back of the goal.”
 - The end of the skills is mentioned.
 - “Push the floor apart and create a crack in the floor between your feet” (squatting)
 - Reduce interference that happens when consciously thinking about it.
 - Removes the conscious thinking portion.
 - Allows the motor system to more naturally organize itself.
 - Research shows enhanced improvement due to use of external cues.
 - **Normal:** An athlete has to figure out on his/her own the cue for completing the process. This often happens through reflecting. An athlete wonders to him/herself, “Which foot did I land on?” “Where were my eyes?” etc. Therefore, you can see how coaches who were previously athletes went from using this type of cue as a player to using internal cues as coaches.
- **Book Recommendation:** Finding Flow. Talks about “flow” experiences in sport, in other words, the moments when everything seems to slow down and you are acting without thinking.
 - Link:
<https://www.amazon.com/Finding-Flow-Psychology-Engagement-Masterminds/dp/0465024114>

- How to break an opponent's flow: Ask them "How do you execute that technique?" In other words, get them to think about things they don't have to normally think about.
- **More examples of external cues:**
 - "Swing to the target" (golf)
 - "Jump through the ball" (striking technique in soccer)
 - "Finish through the wall/tape" (swimming, running)
- **Why do external coaching cues work?**
 - They create long-term learning
 - They help the athlete balance tasks
- **A good external cue needs (3) parts:**
 - Distance (close or far)
 - "Use the hand closest"
 - "Run beyond the tape"
 - "Reach the farthest"
 - Novice athletes need "close" cues
 - Experienced athletes can use the "far" cues, or both
 - Direction (toward or away)
 - Two studies say that "toward" cues work better
 - Description (how you describe the cue to athletes)
 - Use action verbs
 - Push
 - Pull
 - Swing
 - Drive
 - Use analogies
 - "Sweep the table"
 - "Scoop the ice cream"
- **How to create your own coaching cues:**
 - Watch, read, study, research different skills
 - "Get in" with the players (play!) so you can see/understand their perspective
 - Talk with biomechanics, movement experts, and physical literacy experts
 - Perform the skill yourself. Where do the natural breaks happen?