

## Topic: Commander's Intent

Link: [https://coachreed.com/podcast/coachingcode/the\\_c0ach1ng\\_c0de-ep16-said/](https://coachreed.com/podcast/coachingcode/the_c0ach1ng_c0de-ep16-said/)

**The definition of commander's intent:** A clearly defined goal passed on by the commander to his soldiers with the idea that the soldiers are free to accomplish the goal in the manner that they see fit. The commander should also provide the forces (training) necessary to achieve this goal, as well as provide a time frame.

- In other words, what the battlefield will look like at the end of the day.
- Must be more than "we are going to win the game."
- Examples:
  - Get up early and force the other team to play hurried
  - By halftime, we want \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Secure the outpost
- The opposite of micromanagement
- Tell people where to go, but let them choose how to get there
- Intent > plan
- We only need to adapt portions of the plan that require adjustment
- A Germanic reaction to Napoleonic victory where tight control of the troops led to *malicious obedience*

### The benefits of using commander's intent:

- Gives players freedom control of the process
- Players can choose the methods that best suit them
- By having freedom and control, players are more able to develop their analytical, critical thinking skills
- If the coach's plan of action fails but the players have a vision, they can choose a better way to accomplish the goal
- Creates a trusting relationship between coach and player
- It works well with "Groupthink"
  - Groupthink: The idea that most players will abide by the mentality of the group for fear of making their own, different-minded decision and risking criticism due to failure or mistake.
  - By employing commander's intent, which emphasizes a larger, more "big picture" goal of the entire team, rather than focusing on the decisions of each individual, a coach increases the scope of decisions and actions that players may make, choose, or see as acceptable from each other. Groupthink will not go away. So, commander's intent helps the team function despite it.
- It allows our players to act when we are not present.
  - Players can organize warm-ups.
  - Players can make good decisions on the field independently.
- It builds trust between players and coach.
- The coach empowers his/her players to become leaders. Leaders create leaders!
- Better, faster, individualized decision making
- Succession planning / sustainability: The players can succeed even after the coach/leader is gone.
- Provides clarity
- \*\*\*The coach can learn from his/her own players--How they solve problems in ways that the coach may not have imagined!
- Allows the mission to be *devolved* to the lowest level. (Each athlete can interpret the goal in a way that he/she can understand and choose the methods that best suit him/her to accomplish it.)

### Ideas of how to implement commander's intent:

- Choose 2-3 players to run halftime at each game. Rotate players.

- Players lead warm-ups

**Rules / ideas for coaches:**

- No joystick coaching
- Not too much yelling
- Give them a clear game plan and release it
- See yourself as Socrates > all-knowing guru
  - Ask questions!
  - Guide the players to discover the answers themselves
- Read about military tactics
- Read about mission statements of companies and organizations
- 110-to-one rule:
  - At 110 yards away, coach can only offer the player hand signals
  - At 10 yards away, the coach can offer “Twitter” advice: A short, simple message
  - At one yard away, you have their full attention. Now, you can be more detailed.
- Include the players in planning
- Start small, then grow
  - First, timeouts
  - Later, entire sessions!