

Getting your team to talk

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Many of you have asked yourself the following question:

Why is my team (or specific player) so quiet? Why won't they talk?

It is a very common question. However, my question to you is...what exactly do you want them to say?!?

Productive communication vs. Random chatter

- Concept 1- "Clean air"
 - Finite amount of verbal space
 - A player can fill too much (the "loud" one)
- Concept 2- Team Communication = Team Energy
- Style of communication needed (staccato like)
 - Short
 - Distinct
 - Clear
 - Appropriate volume
 - Positive (especially from teammates)
- Productive communication – All to be specified by coach
 - During practice or play – for every contact and situation
 - Between plays – on court and from the bench (coach and players)
 - Non-participating players during a drill
 - Productive communication helps create a culture
- Why do I (as a coach) need to be specific with my team's communication patterns? Why can't they just talk?
 - Do not assume your players will all speak the same volleyball language
 - Your players will connect with each other
 - Your court will have constant communication and therefore will have constant energy
 - Court communication = court energy

During Practice or Play

- General
 - First contact
 1. Mine – Name of teammate (name must be said before contact)
 - Second contact
 1. Mine – Name of teammate (name must be said before contact)
 - Why a name?
 1. People immediately respond to their name
 2. Eliminates unclear words or phrases like “Go,” “Yours,” “Help”
 3. Increases court awareness
- Warm-up
 - Directive (Kelly set)
 - Narrative (I set, Kelly hit)
 - Mirror game application
- Individual Defense
 - Follow first contact rule
 - Why?
 1. Clarify ball between players
 2. Eliminates phrase like...”setter out,” “go”
 3. Court awareness
- Non-setter setting
 - Follow second contact rules (we add type of set)
 - Why?
 1. No indecision by attacker
 2. Clarify ball between players
 3. If the set is out of hitter’s range, the hitter recalls (via a name) to receive help
 4. Eliminates phrases like...”outside”
 5. Court awareness
- Setter setting a tough pass
 - Setting a rhythm set or high ball?
- Serve Receive
 - Pre-serve
 1. Communicate type of server and past result
 2. Communicate passing – open up and say the name of person
 3. Passer – First contact rules
- Attacking
 - Attacker
 1. Yes/No (in rhythm or out of rhythm)
 2. Shot selection
 - Coverage players
 1. Say “coverage” to remind teammates
 2. Shot call

- Team Defense
 - Eye sequencing
 1. Passed ball – on/off/over
 2. Attacker patterns
 3. Set ball (where did the set go?)
 4. Location of set (on/off/inside/outside/perfect)
 5. Read (shot/tip)
- Team Offense
 - Verbal or non-verbal?
 - When? What order?

Between plays – (Use practice to master)

- Players on the court
 - Come together in the middle (positive or negative play)
 - Give BRIEF necessary feedback to each other (EX: “Perfect set,” “That block was too far inside”)
 - Good play = celebration (PRACTICE)
 - Poor play = reconnect
- Coaches to players (players are very aware of what you are doing)
 - Do assist coaches have specified roles?
 - Do coaches celebrate? When?
 - Time and tone of arguing calls with the officials
 - How to communicate to players on the court. How do you get their attention? Do the players look to you after every play?
- Bench Players
 - Positive statements
 - Good play = Celebrate
 - Poor play = support. (Practice during drills)
 - Long periods of bench yelling can interfere with coach-player bench direction
 - Eliminate obvious and “come on” statements. (EX: “Come on ladies, we need to pass the ball!”; “Come on ladies, SIDEOUT!!”, “Come on!!”)