

Leadership in Sports

Packianathan Chelladurai

The Ohio State University

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I have been asked to talk about leadership in sports. But as we all know the manifestations of sport are varied and are distinct from each other. Let me clarify the distinctions among them.

### **Manifestations of Sport**

As shown in this slide, the sport industry is composed of three distinct segments—egalitarian sport (i.e., participant sport), elite sport, and entertainment sport. Incidentally, the term egalitarian means free, classless, equal, open, and unrestricted domain of activity. Egalitarian sport is the basis for the emergence of elite sport where attaining excellence in sport is the goal, and entertainment sport where the excellence in sport is purveyed as entertainment.

Two caveats are in order here. First, the entertainment value of a sport varies from country to country. Cricket is so popular in India and virtually unknown in America and the American Football is not played in other countries. These two sports have the greatest entertainment value in their respective countries and they make the most money.

The second caveat relates to the belief that there must be a broad base of participation in a sport for excellence in that sport to emerge. While this is generally true, it is possible that individuals from one country may excel in a sport which is unknown in that country. Take the case of these two Indians who had been drafted by the professional baseball's Pittsburgh Pirates. Nobody plays baseball in India. Yet these two individuals were identified as great pitchers through a television contest for the fastest throwers. Take this guy, Philip Boit of Kenya where there is no snow. Yet he competes in Olympic and World Ski Championships.

The third segment of the sport industry is entertainment sport. The popularity of a sport is the basis for the entertainment value of that sport. The more popular a sport is the more attractive it is to watch it being played. Further, the more excellent the contestants are, the more appealing it is to watch the contest. It is not surprising that sport organizations have capitalized on this opportunity to commercialize the entertainment value of their respective sport. The glorious examples of such commercial ventures in sport are your own **La Liga**, the English Premier League, Serie A in Italy, the German Budesliga, and the frenc Ligue 1.. The Indian Premier League in cricket is the latest such venture and is ranked the second richest league in all sports.

The fundamental processes of these organizations include recruiting the best players from around the world, and hire well paid coaches to mold them into efficient and effective teams. It must be noted that these organizations do not produce the excellence. But they are good in identifying the excellence produced by others and buying their talent and parade them as entertainment in the form of organized competitions. The league ensures that the teams in the league are equally competitive through a draft system and organizes competitions, and ensures that those competitions are fair and pure.

The three segments of the sport industry are distinct in terms of their goals—pleasure in participation in egalitarian sport; pursuit of excellence in elite sport; and revenue maximization in entertainment sport. In addition, the clients of these enterprises are different—they are the general public in egalitarian sport, the few talented individuals in elite sport, and the paying public in entertainment sport. The three segments are also distinguished on the basis of the environment they interact with and the opportunities and threats therein. For the egalitarian sport, the environment is localized consisting of the community, the local government(s), the

social clubs, the educational institutions, and the local media if any. While elite sports is still dependent on the local environment to support its existence, it also relies on more distal environmental elements such as the regional and national governments, the regional, national, and international sport governing bodies, other competing units in the pursuit of excellence. A unit in entertainment sport (i.e., a franchise) is dependent on both the local and distal environments. For the most part, the paying public hails from the local community. That is, the immediate vicinity constitutes the market. The local governments sanction and to some extent sustain the professional franchise. However, its environment extends to sponsors, media, and other agencies which promote the franchise. Further, the other franchises in the league and the league which control the focal franchise are also significant elements in its environment.

These differences among the three segments can be summed up by saying that egalitarian sport is just playing while elite sport parallels farming where the efforts go into plowing, seeding, watering, and waiting for a while to reap the harvest. Entertainment sport resembles hunting where the animals brought up by nature are hunted to be served as food for the family. You see the hunter did not have anything to do with bringing up the animals that were hunted.

### **Egalitarian versus Elite Sport**

Let me expand on the differences between egalitarian sport and elite sport. Consider these two watches. Both of them keep very good time and both look elegant. But one costs only 5 dollars and 95 cents while the other costs 595 dollars. One is a plaything and the other is a serious piece of jewelry. Incidentally, if I were to buy a watch for my 6 year old granddaughter I will buy the cheap watch, and she would love to play with it. However, you will understand why I would have to buy the costlier watch for my wife. The point here is that these two excellent time pieces serve different purposes satisfying different needs. Similarly, the three forms of the

sport industry may involve the same sport, but they are distinct enterprises with different purposes and processes.

Let me outline the critical differences. Egalitarian sport variously called as mass sport or participant sport is fundamentally a gregarious activity engaged in for the pleasure derived from that activity. It is more closely related to the notion of “play” which Huizinga defined as “a free activity...outside 'ordinary' life and being 'not serious' but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner.” Egalitarian sport includes everyone irrespective of their ability. It is an inclusionary process with the motto, “the more the merrier.”

But elite sport is restricted to persons of high ability with a determination to excel in the activity. It is indeed an exclusionary process whereby those who do not meet the standards are excluded from the process of pursuit of excellence. It is characterized by high dedication, huge sacrifices, and extraordinary effort over a long time. Thus, in contrast to egalitarian sport, elite sport is a serious business requiring great deal of planning for deliberate practice and progressively challenging competitions.

The difference between egalitarian sport and elite sport is actually reflected in the distinction made by Keating, the noted philosopher, between "athletics" and "sport." He notes that sport is derived from the French word *desporter*, a diversionary activity meant to take one away from daily routine work and where participants try to maximize the pleasure from that activity. Athletics is derived from the Greek words *athlos* (i.e., a contest), *athlon* (i.e., a prize), and *athlein* (i.e., to contend for a prize). As the aim of participants in athletics is to win in the contest, they dedicate themselves intensely in practice and sacrifice a lot in the process.

In the international context, the term "athletics" refers to one form of physical activity which is known as track and field in North America. To avoid this confusion, I have used Keating's other labels—*pursuit of pleasure* and *pursuit of excellence*.

### **Pursuit of Pleasure**

People may participate in sport and physical activity because they enjoy the kinesthetic sensations experienced in that activity, and/or the competition posed by certain activities (e.g., a game of squash). The benefit they seek (i.e., the pleasure of participation) can be enjoyed only during participation; that is, they are not seeking any other benefits outside of actual participation itself. Such participation is a *cooperative effort to maximize the pleasure for all participants*. Pursuit of pleasure is characterized by *spontaneity* (i.e., it does not need any preparation or training), *moderation* (i.e., it is not practiced in excess), and *generosity* (i.e., being generous to other participants particularly the opponents). For instance, players who engage in tennis for the pleasure of it may not argue over a point. That is, they will not seek *legal justice* over a point.

### **Pursuit of Excellence**

To excel is to surpass others. Excellence indicates that a person is superior to others in an activity. The emphasis on comparison with peers is critical in our context. For example, an outstanding wrestler in the junior ranks (or in one weight class) will not be outstanding when compared to adult wrestlers (or wrestlers in higher weight classes). For the present purposes, I define excellence as performance at the highest levels within each comparative group of participants. As a corollary, such excellence is established through victories in organized competitions. .

This distinction between pursuit of pleasure and pursuit of excellence is not fully captured by other dichotomies that we use such as *youth sports* versus *adult sports*; *mass* versus *elite* sport or *competitive* sport versus *recreational sport*. In the first case, the distinction rests on the age of the participants. In the second case, the distinction refers to the obtained status or the number of participants. In the third case, the relative emphasis placed on competition is the distinguishing characteristic. My contention is that the distinction between pursuit of pleasure and pursuit of excellence is even more critical because it highlights the different purposes and processes of the two enterprises without reference to age, attained status, or the competitive element.

The clear distinction between these two purposes of sport participation becomes blurred because of two processes that are common to both—*skill acquisition* and *competition*.

### ***Pursuit of Skill***

The human desire to feel a sense of competence in whatever one does extend to physical activity also. That is, acquiring physical skills may indeed be the goal of participation in sport and physical activity. That is, individuals may focus on perfecting their skills through continued vigorous physical activity.

It is important to note that the pursuit of skill is fundamental to both the pursuits of pleasure and excellence. In sport as pursuit of pleasure, such pleasure is maximized to the extent the participants are skilled in that activity. For instance, two tennis players would enjoy the game more if both of them are skilled enough to keep the ball in play for longer periods. Otherwise they would only be chasing and fetching the loose balls most of the time. We must also note that the pleasure in sport is maximized when both contestants are *equally* skilled.

It is most obvious that developing and mastering the skills is also fundamental to pursuit of excellence. The critical function of enhanced skills in pursuit of excellence is to ensure a victory in a contest, that is, demonstration of excellence. In other words, establishing *inequality* in skills is a dominant way to demonstrate excellence.

### ***Competition***

As for competition, it is an essential component of both pursuit of pleasure and pursuit of excellence. However, in sport as pursuit of pleasure, the *process of winning* (trying hard to win a point) is the ingredient that contributes to pleasure. It is immaterial if, in fact, one wins that point or not. Such pleasure is maximized when both contestants engage with equal intensity in the process of winning.

On the other hand, in sport as pursuit of excellence, the outcome of the competition is critical. That is, one can establish excellence only by defeating the opponents in the contest. It will not matter if the opponents are of lesser caliber. What matters is the victory in the contest. Thus, athletic competitions become *zero-sum* games. That is, there can be only one winner in a contest. If one team wins, the other team loses.

Although skill acquisition and competition facilitate the goals in both pursuit of pleasure and pursuit of excellence, the conceptual and functional distinction between the two should not be overlooked. As described above, the two enterprises need to be viewed as “ideal systems.” Each system is legitimate and rational in achieving its stated purpose. The essential distinction between these two forms of endeavor requires that different structures and processes be instituted to achieve their respective primary goals. One of the most critical processes in this regard is

leadership, the focus of this presentation. I will confine the present exercise to leadership in the pursuit of excellence.

### **Leadership in Sports**

Now we come to my own multidimensional model of leadership in sports. This slide presents a schematic representation of the model. Briefly, the model envisages three states of leaders behavior—required, preferred, and actual. The independent variables are those that determine the leader behavior and are classified into situational characteristics, member characteristics, and leader characteristics. The output or the dependent variables in the model are group performance and member satisfaction.

Required leader behavior is considered to be mainly influenced by situational characteristics while the preferred behavior is mainly influenced by member characteristics. The determinants of the actual leader behavior include all three independent variables. The fundamental thrust of the model is that group performance and member satisfaction are determined by the degree of congruence among the three states of leader behavior.

Our earlier discussion of the differences between egalitarian sport and elite sport clearly shows that the leadership of these two ventures would be different. Let me identify some leader behaviors that are more pertinent to pursuit of excellence, i.e., elite sport.

### **Creating a Vision**

In this dimension, the coach creates a new vision for the performer by setting new objectives, and instituting new strategies. In addition, the coach convinces the performer of the

viability of the new vision, expresses confidence in the performer, and secures the commitment of the performer to the new vision.

### **Inspirational Communication**

The coach inspires the athletes to extend themselves to achieve excellence by stimulating enthusiasm, building confidence, instilling pride, enhancing morale, setting example of courage and dedication, and sharing the hardships.

### **Intellectual Stimulation**

The coach engages the athlete's intellect by challenging existing assumptions and attitudes, encouraging creativity and innovation, and presenting holistic perspectives. The athlete should be able to see his or her activity in its totality and understand the scheme of things surrounding the performance.

### **Individualized and Supportive Leadership**

The coach pays individualized and personal attention to each member, expressing appreciation for efforts, providing corrective feedback, assigning special responsibilities, counseling, and being concerned and supportive.

### **Personal Recognition**

As most athletic performances are public, the athlete is likely to be recognized for good performances by the family, the fans, and the media. However, the practice sessions are carried out privately with specific preplanned goals. The achievement of these practice goals is critical to pursuit of excellence. The coach, as the most significant other (perhaps the only significant other) recognizes those small achievements and provide rewards such as praise.

### **Demanding and Directive Leadership**

As practice in sport could be boring and tiring both mentally and physically, some of those in pursuit of excellence may tend to give up on the practice. Hence, the coach needs to demand that they persist in the planned training regimen and direct them to carry out specific activities. The essence of this form of behavior is what is meant when a coach is described as a hard task-master or a slave driver.

### **Emphasis on Winning**

A necessary ingredient of pursuit of excellence is winning in competitions against opponents. So it is necessary for the coach to emphasize performance and winning in competitions. The statement attributed to Vince Lombardi that “winning isn’t everything, it is the only thing” is relevant to pursuit of excellence in sport.

I distinguish between “winning at all costs” and “winning by any means.” Pursuit of excellence is a costly affair in terms of time, energy, and money spent on it. (A recent report said that it would cost approximately 80,000 US dollars annually to train for high level skating. And Roger Federer dropped out of school to pursue excellence in Tennis!) If an athlete incurs additional expenditure to ensure winning, then it would be winning at all costs. The coach may indeed recommend it. On the other hand, winning by any means includes means not inherent in the activity or sanctioned by convention and policy. Such activities would include doping, cheating on the rules, and willfully injuring an opponent either in competition or outside of it. Obviously, the coach should instill in the athlete the difference between winning at all costs and winning by any means, and

encourage only the former. The ideal coach will not be among those who believe that “if you are not cheating, you are not trying!”

### **Cultivating Self-Interest**

Pursuit of excellence in sport requires that the athletes seek the rewards of their efforts for themselves, even when their efforts may deprive another of the rewards. Given this proviso, the coach should reinforce this self-interest in the athlete, convince the athlete that self-interest is morally defensible, and show that such self-interest is foundational to the pursuit of excellence. While doing so, the coach cultivates the sense of justice and fairness to all, including competitors.

### **Instilling Task and Ego Orientation**

The coach needs to cultivate and reinforce the task orientation of those who pursue excellence; That is, the tendency to strive to progressively improve personal performance. However, pursuit of excellence in sport also requires that one performs better than one's peers to demonstrate superiority (i.e., the ego orientation. So the idea of external referents in performance is as important as the internal or self-based referents. In other words, pursuit of excellence in sports requires a simultaneous focus on both task and ego orientation on the part of the athletes. The management consulting firm, Accenture, uses Tiger Woods in various poses of playing golf to advertise their services. In one of them, it is implied that 51% Tiger's efforts are focused on outperforming himself and 49% in outperforming the competitors.

### **Task- and Ego-Involving Climates**

While the forgoing focused on individual orientation, the literature also suggest that a coach can create a climate that is conducive for the development of either task orientation or ego orientation in individuals. The Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire consists of six dimensions. Of these, the three dimensions reflecting task-climate are cooperative learning, important role, and effort improvement. The other three dimensions of punishment for mistakes, unequal recognition, and intra-team member rivalry are reflective of the ego climate. Many scholars recommend that creating and maintaining a task-involved climate is beneficial, and the other form of climate is detrimental to member satisfaction, enjoyment, and commitment to participation.

It is clear that a greater focus on task-involving climate is most relevant to pursuit of pleasure and that the ego-involved climate is antithetical to the essential thrust of that enterprise. By the same token, a task-involved climate is the bedrock of the pursuit of excellence. However, I have argued that the ego-involved climate also contributes to the pursuit of excellence. Let us look at some specific instances. When a coach expresses disappointment over a mistake at a crucial juncture in a competition, it is a punishment (reflecting an ego-involving climate), but it is legitimate and required in the context of the pursuit of excellence. Unequal recognition is certainly problematic in the pursuit of pleasure. However, unequal recognition is part of the process in the pursuit of excellence as in the distinction between starters and substitutes in basketball. The process of tryouts is to identify and select the best and by the same token eliminate those who do not measure up. In essence, pursuit of excellence is an exclusionary process, and therefore, the leaders and coaches in pursuit of excellence should not be faulted for not bestowing equal recognition on all. Intra-team rivalry is also a necessary condition for pursuit of excellence in team sports. That is, the coach should encourage every athlete to be

better than others, including teammates. The striving by everyone to be better than teammates with a view to getting on the starting line-up ensures that everyone gets better, so that the whole team gets better. A final point on the topic. Given that pursuit of excellence consists of both practice and performance stages, it is posited here that task involvement needs to be paramount in the practice stage and ego involvement in the performance stage.

Christopher Janelle and his colleague have identified the domains in which a person has to gain expertise in order to become excellent in a sport. Their elaborate scheme is presented in this slide. For our purposes we can summarize them as follows:

### **Technical Training**

Technical training refers to training in the skills and movement patterns of a given sport. It would also include coach's instruction and directives toward increasing athletes' physical and physiological capacities.

### **Cognitive Training**

Cognitive training focuses on the tactics and strategies, and an understanding of the appropriateness of them in different circumstances. The attention to and interpretation of cues, and decision making thereof would also be central to cognitive training.

### **Emotional Training**

Emotions have a significant impact in pursuit of excellence in sport at the practice stage, and more so at the performance stage. It is important that coach trains the athlete in recognizing

and regulating personal emotions. By the same token, the athlete needs to learn to recognize the emotions of the opponent, and exploit them to personal advantage.

### **Model of Pursuit of Excellence**

Here is the model of pursuit of excellence in sport. In brief, the person with the relevant talent, dispositions, and beliefs engages in deliberate practice to master the skills and gain the strategic and tactical knowledge to perform well. The performance successes would, in turn, indicate the level of perfection or excellence achieved.

The coach's responsibility is to cultivate the dispositions and beliefs in the person that would facilitate meaningful practice. In the practice stage, the coach would be able to most effectively shape the person's skills and abilities, dispositions, and beliefs. Finally, the coach has a significant role at the performance stage where he or she helps the athlete concentrate on the task at hand and control the thoughts and emotions.

### **Deliberate Practice**

Ericsson and associates are emphatic in suggesting that *deliberate practice* is more important than innate ability in the determination of expert performance. Deliberate practice is where the individual puts forth significant effort to engage in highly relevant activities that are specially designed to improve performance. The major thrust of their arguments is that deliberate practice is both *necessary* and *sufficient*.

In Ericsson's view, most of the relevant inherited characteristics can be modified and/or improved through deliberate practice except height which has a certain advantage in activities like basketball. As an aside, lack of height need not be a barrier to play basketball as shown in

this slide. I do not have to explain why Earl Boykin is my hero! He demonstrates that mastery of skills can surmount deficiency in height to some extent.

Ericsson argued that deliberate practice is not intrinsically satisfying. Accordingly, any activity that is engaged for pleasure would not be part of the deliberate practice. This idea is not new. The Greeks had associated the term *agonia* with the term *athlos* meaning that pursuit of excellence is an agonistic process. This is reflected in the common slogan of “no pain no gain.”

While many would subscribe to this perspective, there is a contrasting perspective that experts in sport performance actually enjoy their intense training. Studies have shown that athletes do enjoy the experience of expending extraordinary painstaking efforts. This view is echoed in the concept of *runner's high* which suggests that the runners do enjoy running and get a kick out of it.

### **The Flow Experience**

The recent application of the concept of *flow* in the sporting context sheds some light on the experience of joy in agonistic practice. Flow is a “very positive state that typically occurs when a person perceives a balance between the challenges associated with a situation and her capabilities to accomplish or meet these demands.” Jackson and associates identified nine dimensions of flow. The five dimensions that could be influenced by the coach are shown in this slide. The most significant aspect of the flow experience is the felt balance between the challenge faced by the athlete and his or her skills. The coach can design the training sessions and the competitions in such a way that the challenge of the task increases progressively with the skills mastered by the athlete. This process over the weeks, months, and years would culminate in highest challenges being matched with requisite mastery of skills. Similarly, the coach can

help by setting clear goals and providing accurate feedback on the progress made toward those goals. The coach can also cultivate the psychological skills of concentrating on the task at hand, and gaining a sense of control over the situation.

### **A Contrasting Perspective**

There is another line of research that appears to be contrary to my recommendations for leadership in elite sports. That research and recommendations are based on achievement goal theory. According to achievement goal theory, individuals adopt two different achievement goals—*task* goals and *ego* goals. A person with the task goal is focused on development of competence and to that person continued improvement is an indication of success. It has been shown that because success and failure is based on self-referenced standards, a person is more concerned about improving and less concerned about proving to others about one's competence. In contrast, a person with an ego goal is more concerned with the demonstration of competence in the presence of others and that person feels competent only if his or her performance compares favorably with those of others. Further, that person places a greater emphasis on ability and minimizes the importance of effort. As a result, that person is likely to drop out of sports if others are expected to do well.

This line of thinking leads to the suggestion that the coach is expected to create a climate of task-involving climate where emphasis is placed on individual improvements and enjoyment of the processes of enhancing one's competence. In a task-involved climate, communal learning is promoted and all members are treated equally and included in all activities. The coach emphasizes effort as its own reward and recognizes and praises the improvements individuals make.

### **Autonomy-Supportive Leadership**

With a similar thrust, Amorose and associates and Vallerand and associates have advanced the model of autonomy-supportive leadership to link leader behavior with participant motivation and continued participation. This new effort in leadership research is based on Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (SDT). Deci and Ryan note that humans are characterized by three needs—autonomy, relatedness and competence. To the extent participation in sports contributes to the satisfaction of these needs, the participant would continue to participate in sports. Accordingly, a coach's responsibility is to create conditions that foster the sense of competence, autonomy, and relatedness among the participants. The specific form of leader behavior that would have such an impact is labeled *autonomy-support* and it would involve (a) providing choices within specific rules and boundaries, (b) explaining the tasks and boundaries, (c) recognizing members' feelings and perspectives, (d) allowing individuals to take initiative, (e) providing non-controlling feedback, (f) avoiding criticisms and rewards to control behavior, and (g) reducing ego-involvement in members (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003).

Mageau and Vallerand's model of the coach-athlete relationship is presented in this slide. According to this model, a coach's behavior supporting autonomy among participants and his or her interpersonal involvement with athletes would enhance athletes' sense of being competent, autonomous, and related.

The two models of leadership do advocate opposing (not simply diverging) perspectives on the topic. My suggestions of a more demanding and directing type of leadership and our studies showing that athletes preferred their coaches to be relatively more autocratic in decision-making point to a *hard leadership*. On the other hand, the autonomy-supportive leadership, and the emphasis on task-involved climate which foster a sense of well-being and

intrinsic motivation in the individual is labeled *soft leadership*.

### **Bridging the Perspectives**

These contrasting approaches are both meaningful if we consider the outcomes envisaged in the two leadership paradigms. While the autonomy-supportive leadership approach is focused on individual motivation and well-being, my recommendations are largely oriented toward member performance and progressive attainment of excellence.

This slide shows how I reconcile these two approaches. I argue that the autonomy-supportive leadership approach is oriented toward individual motivation and well-being and the issue of performance is rarely mentioned in that context. But my advocacy of hard leadership in the pursuit of excellence is largely focused on member performance and progressive attainment of excellence. Thus the differences in the approaches to the study of leadership may be seen as a function of the goals of participation (i.e., pursuit of pleasure/skill versus pursuit of excellence) and type of sport (individual or team sports).

The suggestion that one form of leadership is more germane to one goal of participation or one form of sport does not mean that either of the leadership styles would be totally absent in either context. Even in pursuit of pleasure there will likely be some demanding/commanding behaviors by designated leaders. Similarly, the high-performance leader may exhibit autonomy-support behavior and cultivate task-orientation in specific instances. As shown in this slide, the commanding and demanding leader behaviors will increase as the participant moves from pursuit of pleasure toward pursuit of excellence. But it also shows that neither of the leadership is totally absent from either of the domains of participation.

### **Molding a Team**

My model of hard leadership is largely focused on developing individuals to their fullest potential and help them achieve excellence. In the process, the coach encourages self-orientation and self interest among the players. While this process is legitimate and functional, it also leads to the problem of building a team from among the self-oriented players. Bert Carron and I have labeled the process of building a team as creating a coalition of maximum resources. That is, the coach has to emphasize that an individual can win only if the team wins, and the team can win only if the best members are in it, and that the only way they can win is to collaborate effectively with each other. In molding a coalition of maximum resources, the coach has to be concerned not only with the objective assessment of the manifest and latent talents and skills of the athletes, but also with the optimal use of these talents and skills.

### **Objective Assessment of Resources**

It is trite to say that the most significant task of a coach is to assess as objectively as possible the talents and skills of the competitors. But this needs to be emphasized, since many of the conflicts within a competitive team can be attributed to the discrepancies among the members (including the coach) in their evaluation of the contributions of each of the athletes. The dissatisfaction and frustration need not be confined to one or two individuals. All of the members may be affected if, according to their perceptions, the team does not approximate a coalition of maximum resources. It is important that, irrespective of the objective situation, there be a greater degree of consensus on what constitutes a coalition of maximum resources.

### **Using Optimal Combinations**

What is more crucial than the objective assessment of resources in absolute terms is the manner in which these resources are combined to present the most effective alignment. The optimal combinations depend on (a) the complementarity in abilities, and (b) the compatibility in psychological parameters.

(a) **Complementarity in Abilities.** Many of the team sports consist of specialized tasks (e.g., the guard in basketball, the setter in volleyball). Such specialization implies that these sub-tasks will be complementing each other in the attainment of the group's objectives. It behooves the coach to plan an alignment with an optimal mix of the available talents and skills. This process is likely to result in one or two individuals being left out of the alignment even though they may perceive themselves to be superior in absolute talents and skills to those in the alignment.

(b) **Psychological Compatibility.** Apart from the complementarity in physical talents and skills, there needs to be a meshing of the psychological dispositions of the members. The crucial personality disposition pertinent to the present discussion is the tendency to dominate, control or lead others and the tendency to be dominated, controlled or led by others. We are familiar with the notion of a floor leader, or a playmaker. The individual occupying such a position should possess a high degree of need to control, while the others' needs are minimal in this respect. An astute coach will be concerned about an alignment of players that is psychologically compatible. Again, there will be a few left out of the alignment. The dissatisfaction and frustration of such athletes would greatly contribute to internal conflicts. It then becomes important for the coach to communicate the reasons for the proposed alignment and convince the athletes that the proposal is, in fact, *THE* coalition of maximum resources.

There is yet another issue. Even when included in the proposed alignment, a member can still be dissatisfied because the alignment may not use those abilities that the member values most. Individuals perceive themselves more proficient in some skill areas than in others. The proposed alignment, however, may utilize these individuals in those skill areas in which they are relatively less proficient. Again, the coach needs to explain clearly the logic behind the proposed alignment.

### **Distribution of Rewards**

The rewards sought by athletes have been generally categorized as intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic rewards such as achievement, sense of competence, and mastery of skills are given to the individual by himself or herself. Our concern here is with the extrinsic rewards (such as prestige and acclaim) which are administered by others. We have already suggested that the rewards be distributed in proportion to the resources (or contributions) of the athletes. The coach is faced with two specific problems in this regard. First, the coach is not in sole control of all the extrinsic rewards that accrue to the athletes. The media and the fans tend to isolate individual stars and shower their acclaim and support on them without reference to the contributions made by other members on the team (that is, contributions made not only to the total group effort but also to the glitter of the star). Since the athletic environment is devoid of equitable rewards for efforts and contributions of every athlete, the coach has to fill the void by offering his personal rewards. The coach's personal rewards are very potent and how they are distributed is critical for the stability and effectiveness of the coalition. The principle of "equal rewards for equal performance" will guide the coach in dispensing his or her personal rewards. The problem here is the accurate assessment of the performances of the players. Some positions may play a

supportive role. Their contributions, though not very visible, are crucial for the total team performance. An effective coach will identify these contributions and reward them accordingly.