

# Psychological skills and competencies

- In coaching individual icehockey  
player

Jukka-Pekka Annala

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# Main challenges

- ◆ The concept of psychological skill is like a continent yet to explore
- ◆ Whatever maps, theories or stories we see or hear, they are not from our world and part of reality we acknowledge
- ◆ Today it is a whole new ballgame and brand new players

# More challenges in this field

- ◆ Taking a good look into individuals psyche and evaluating psychological skills is very complicated task
- ◆ Communicating and effecting is crucial
- ◆ One can not communicate if one is not familiar with the theme (or topic)
- ◆ One can not effect in desired way if there is no control and a probable outcome

# In real life

- ◆ You are affecting players all the time
- ◆ You wish that they become more skilled and more productive in your shared world
- ◆ It can be like you are describing a pink colour to a blind man
- ◆ You can also be accurate – and successful
- ◆ Some of you are geniuses and some of you are not

# So

◆ Giving it a try produces no harm for the players.

# What I am talking about

- ◆ Is breaking down too big entity
- ◆ Analytically appropriate perception
- ◆ And presenting a tool how to measure and effect psychological skills of one individual

# Case to display

- ◆ I am showing one part of real training program that we have started with Finnish National Team U-16
- ◆ We are interested in our future winners and world top level players
- ◆ We are aware of the fact that the drop out percentage is pretty high by the players reaching age of 30

# Demonstration competencies

- ◆ Confidence
- ◆ Goal orientation
- ◆ Independency



# Each competency must be seen in real life, in action

- ◆ It must be possible for more than one person to see the competency in action
- ◆ There should be a validated relation between the competency and the behaviour
- ◆ There can and must be coaches own language and cultural effect

# Confident player

- ◆ Trusts his own abilities in practice and in games played
- ◆ Can be realistic and open about his strengths and skills to improve
- ◆ Is not too sensitive about criticism and feedback
- ◆ Thinks his ideas and opinion is worth something and says it out loud

# Goal oriented player

- ◆ Sets himself clearly defined and challenging goals (short and long term)
- ◆ Sticks to the plan and shows endurance even when times are tough
- ◆ Evaluates timeplans and level of development
- ◆ Does not give up
- ◆ Ready to do some extra to reach the goal

# Independent player

- ◆ Works initiatively, takes action in not so clear situations
- ◆ Learns from mistakes and success
- ◆ Works independetly, does not need pampering or supervisoning
- ◆ Follows his own development and recognizes changes in himself
- ◆ Writes trainingdiary

# The study/research

- ◆ We have 11 key competencies
- ◆ Each competency has 5 to 10 typical behaviour that we evaluate after first three month period (Coaches determined)
- ◆ Annala, Rautio and Siekkinen (+ players' coaches in some cases)
- ◆ Measurement of relevant competencies using SHL Questionnaire (OPQ)

# The study/research

- ◆ Next evaluation after 1,5 years
- ◆ Third evaluation after three years
- ◆ Follow up is possible and interesting
- ◆ So in 10 years we have good data about finnish world class players and the competencies that help them get there
- ◆ In 20 years we have also one sosiological possible case of group of talented players after hockey career (coached this way)

# In fact

- ◆ We are just coaching them and trying to give them alternative ways of growing up
- ◆ The athleticism is essential
- ◆ Mental preparation and concentration
- ◆ Ability to be fully present (here and now)
- ◆ Their own opinion and their own voice is necessary in becoming top level athlete

# Our tools

- ◆ Thorough planning
- ◆ Competencies the game demands
- ◆ Basic technical skills (ability to teach)
- ◆ Acceptance and transaction (close range)
- ◆ Body control, imagery, relaxation
- ◆ Emotion and brain