

# COACHABILITY

## THE MOST IMPORTANT OF OUR “ABILITIES”

Earl Weaver, former manager of the Baltimore Orioles, had a rule that no one could steal a base unless he gave the steal sign. This rule upset one of his star players, who felt he knew the pitchers and catchers across the league well enough to judge when he could steal. One day he decided to steal without a sign. He got a good jump off the pitcher and easily beat the throw to second base. As he shook the dirt from his uniform, he smiled with delight, feeling he had vindicated his judgment. Weaver later pulled the player aside and explained why he hadn't given the steal sign. The next batter was Lee May, a major power hitter. Because first base was open, the opposing team walked May. The batter after May hadn't been strong against this pitcher, so Weaver had to send in a designated hitter. That left their team without the bench strength they needed later in the game. The player had seen a stolen base as involving only the relationship between pitcher and catcher. Weaver was calling signals with the entire game in mind. As is often the case, a player's decision to “do his own thing” ended up being detrimental to the overall team effort!

When we talk about an athlete's abilities, we often think of that person's physical gifts. But there are other “abilities” that are even more important: dependability, availability, and reliability... to name a few. But most coaches, in any sport, would tell you that coachability is the most important of them all! Coaches spend countless hours in staff meetings, breaking down film, planning practice, analyzing the opponent, and creating a sound game plan. It is crucial that players have faith in their coaches, then do their very best to carry out that game plan. There are so many moving parts on any play that if even one person does not do their job as they were coached to do, it can be the difference between victory and defeat. In a national survey of over 100 college coaches, here are the top eight characteristics chosen as the most important to being coachable:

1. Selflessness 2. Willingness to be coached 3. Willingness to sacrifice for the team 4. Acceptance of criticism 5. Acceptance of individual role on the team 6. Positive response to discipline 7. Attentiveness 8. Respect for authority

Without fail, one of the first questions college coaches ask the high school coach when they are interested in recruiting a player is “How coachable is this player?” ... This is a fact!!

1. What happens if a team has several players who are not very coachable?
2. When have you not been as coachable as you should have been?
3. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rank your coachability?
4. What can you work on to make yourself better match the 8 characteristics listed above?
5. What is the most important thing this team can do to become a more coachable team?

The ship that will not obey the helm will have to obey the rocks!