

BSA Trademark Session – Leading Teams

The 11th year of the Barwon Sports Academy's support for talented young athletes began on Thursday night with a Trademark session led by well known Performance Improvement facilitators Leading Teams. 100 of our regions most talented athletes from over 15 different sports, all with the common goal of reaching their full potential.

Young athlete ranging from 12 - 18 years old, some first year BSA members whilst others returning for up to 6 years. Key questions they were asked to consider. Who do I represent when I turn up to train, play or just attend an event? What can I contribute to the culture of the organisation? What behaviors will positively impact? Which will have a negative impact? Then, an often more difficult one for young people. How do I react if I see behavior that is not within our expected trademark? How do I reward and encourage great behavior?

Many parents will not remember doing a lot of culture building activity in our junior sport days. Sure we got a stern word from the coach if we were "playing up" and maybe a quiet reprimand from our parents on the way home. Our team mates probably didn't provide much of the feedback as junior. In senior sport less tolerance was probably shown from our adult peers but kids, not wanting to come across as a "big head" probably let poor behavior slide for the coach to deal with.

What is culture and why is it beneficial to have your young teams decide upon the behaviors they will and will not tolerate from each other? Listening to Jake Bridges lead the BSA athletes through this process reminded me of how powerful it is to have a leaderful team. To have player driven expectations where there is "buy in" from each player in order to made a positive contribution to the teams function. In 40+ years of being involved in sport, kids always seem to want to be on the winning team. The question is, how does this winning team form, what are the qualities required and how does empowering the players on the field create a better chance for success.

The BSA athletes may come from various sports but the common understanding is that they all must set goals, both personal and within their sport. Part of this is training goals and health goals. If each athlete is to get the most out of the strength and conditioning sessions we run then their colleagues must be of the right mindset, have similar standards and respect the behaviors required for each session to be maximum value. This is a powerful environment. Talented basketballer Jack Terrill shared with the group that it was through seeing 2017 BSA athlete and now AIS member Agnes Emma Nopu shake hands and thank her trainer sincerely after every session, that he decided he to would show such respect. The power of example!

As the 2018 group start out we do so with a reminder of the environment that a 14 year old Jakara Anthony entered only 5 years ago. Void of a local training environment, this young Mogul skier arrived at her first session with the trepidation and nervousness of a school girl at a new school. It wasnt long before the likes of Jacinta Carroll, Pat Crisp (Water skiing) and Eliza Kol (Swimming) provided the example of a "focused and driven athlete". Jakara soon found comfort in the fact that she was surrounded by other athletes, all on their own personal journey of self improvement and all possibly playing a small roll in this future Winter Olympians path.

From Jake's facilitation we now have trademark behaviors that our athletes will try to live by. They will encourage each other, try to learn how to correct training partners if they lose focus and certainly reward positive behavior as often as possible. This week we will take the U16 Geelong Falcons through a similar process and with some commitment and follow through our ME focus that many enter with will hopefully become a WE focus that can increase our chances of success.

Cameron Loftus is the CEO of Barwon Sports Academy and the Coach of the Geelong Falcons U16 program



