

Student Leadership – Part 2

Developing leadership through sport

As the second part of a series exploring how schools can be more deliberate in their approach to developing the leadership skills of their students, Dr Andy Kemp (Principal – The National Mathematics and Science College) & Alex Battison (Senior Deputy Head – Lord Wandsworth College) turn their attention in this article to the role that Sport can play in helping students develop these crucial leadership skills...



Andy Kemp

In many ways sport provides an ideal forum for the development of leadership skills. The structure of sport means, for the most part, that there is a regular cycle within which you can test and refine. The weekly routine of practice, performance, and review creates a condensed life cycle quite unlike most other parts of school life. So where are the best opportunities for us to enable our students to use this forum to develop their leadership potential?

As with most aspects of leadership development it begins with intention. In an ideal world, the role of the coach is to increasingly make themselves unnecessary so the team are able to operate autonomously.

This begins through the development of an agreed core purpose. There are different ways of doing this, but the core purpose should outline the aspirations of the team, the things they are going to focus on, and how they want to be seen and understood by others. This core purpose will then provide the team with the necessary

framework with which to take ownership of the experience.

So what does this mean the role of the coach is within this model? The coach is there to act as a mediator, helping manage the relationship between the team and the challenges and complexity that they face. If our students are going to develop their leadership potential on the sports pitch, it is crucial that the coach understands where their role starts and ends. Ultimately once the team cross that white line, then the players are on their own... If the team are prepared, and following their agreed core purpose, then the coach should be able to step back and look for the opportunities where they can intervene rather than interfere! We've all seen too many examples of coaches (or more often overly enthusiastic parents) trying to remotely direct the whole team from the sidelines. All this does in the long run is disempower the team as they increasingly don't feel a sense of ownership or responsibility for their actions.

Taking this one stage further we'd challenge to think about whether the team actually needs a captain? Why not instead have a rotating group of players and meet with them each week to review and plan. Use these meetings as opportunities to collaboratively plan training, to review the performance of the team, and to plan for the next fixture? Empower the students to challenge and support each other as part of the process.

The key to making this work is to collaboratively build up as a group the necessary principles and framework. Once these are clear and understood it is much easier for the students to step in to leadership. Focusing first on questions of influence and initiative, and then reflect on leading themselves. For example are they taking responsibility for leading their own warmup routine? Or are they waiting to be told to do something...

Then to encourage them to really embrace and embody these principles practice sessions can be

designed to keep them thinking and reflecting on how they apply these principles and frameworks in practice. Try removing a position from the field, or have the coach play the role of a biased referee, and encourage the students to reflect on how they can adapt and continue to achieve their core purpose in this altered scenario. The more we do this the more they own and embody these beliefs and the more they will be able to effectively lead themselves, and each other.



Alex Battison



Art teachers hosted workshop

The Art Department at Bryanston School ran a series of special public workshops for the first time as part of Dorset Art Weeks 2021. There was also an Open Studio featuring some of the latest works by its staff.

According to Doug Knight, Head of Art at Bryanston, such active participation in one of the country's largest biennial open studio events has been a long time in the planning.

"We had hoped to be involved last year but, not surprisingly, the pandemic knocked that on the

Pictured: 'Caroline', one of the portraits by Jack Dickson exhibited at Bryanston School during Dorset Art Weeks 2021

head. For quite some time, we have been looking at different ways to support art development in the local community and to provide budding local artists with the chance to benefit from the diverse range of skills within our team. Running dedicated workshops for all ages as part of the county's most popular art event was the perfect opportunity.

"Dorset Art Weeks also provided our team with a rare collective opportunity to showcase their skills and latest works to a wider audience.

The staff from the Art Department who ran the workshops and displayed their recent works included: Jindra Jehu (abstract paintings), Anthony Connolly (portraiture), Mark Hilde (sculptural ceramics), Helen Dean (drawings and abstract paintings), Monica Sinclair-Smith (paper clay sculpture), Gary Cedeira (landscape paintings), Doug Knight (abstract paintings and screen printing), Jack Dickson (portraiture), Denise Pearson (recycled mixed media), Duncan Wright (mixed media), Sue Macpherson (photography) and Mike Owens (mixed media).