

Nine for IX Film Discussion Guide: *The '99ers (for Coaches & Teams)*

Key Concepts:

- Performance Excellence
- Mental Toughness
- Team Cohesion
- Leadership
- Applied Sport Psychology
- Psychology Of Coaching
- Goal Setting
- Motivational Climate
- Coach-Athlete Relationship
- Team Culture

Discussion Questions:

1. Based on what you saw in the film, what do you think contributed to making them a championship team (note: positive attitude, work ethic, never give up, intrinsic motivation, focus on the team “we”-rather than individual “me”, attentional focus-focus on the right things at the right time, managing stress, mental toughness)? What role did fun and enjoyment and love of the game play in the success of the ‘99 team?
2. In the film Abby Wambach says “I wanted to play on a team like *that!*” referring to the 99ers. What do you think she meant by “that” in terms of the qualities of the team she admired?
3. The best goal scorer in the world, Mia Hamm, didn’t want to take a penalty kick in the final of the World Cup. Hamm didn’t feel confident, but she took the PK and was successful. What did you learn from her in that situation about confidence and performance? Brandi Chastain was asked by the coach to take the last penalty kick to win the World Cup with her off foot! What did you learn from her in that situation about confidence and performance? (note: You don’t have to feel confident to perform your best. You are not your thoughts. Stay in the present moment, stay away from thoughts of the past or the future. Mental toughness is about performing your best on command regardless of the situation. Focus on the task and what you need to do to perform your best.)
4. What role did their captains and team leaders have in the team’s success? What does it look like to be a team leader of a championship team?

5. Although you don't see featured in the film, the team's sport psychology consultant Dr. Colleen Hacker, worked with the team for a number of years. What aspects of applied sport psychology are evident in the film (note: imagery, team building, positive self-talk, staying focused in the present, managing stress and anxiety, dealing with pressure, focus on fun and enjoyment rather than outcome, goal setting, responding vs. reacting, focusing on one game at a time, fun and enjoyment)? Do you think mental training and working with a sport psychology consultant played a role in their success?
6. At the end of the film, what did the 99ers say about what the team meant to them in retrospect? Why is that important?

Additional Readings:

DiCicco, T., Hacker, C., & Salzberg, C. (2003). *Catch Them Being Good: Everything You Need to Know to Successfully Coach Girls*. Penguin Books.

EXCERPT FROM READING: Tony DiCicco coached the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team to victory in the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta & the World Cup in 1999. Colleen Hacker was the sport psychology consultant for the team. They join their expertise in this accessible, useful guide for coaches at all levels.

Gould, D., Voelker, D., Griffes, K. (2013). Best Coaching Practices for Developing Team Captains. *The Sport Psychologist*, 27(1),13-26.

Hodge, K., Henry, G., & Smith, W. (2014). A Case Study of Excellence in Elite Sport: Motivational Climate in a World Champion Team. *Sport Psychologist*, 28(1), 60-74.

Jeff Janssen Sports Leadership Center: Resources include championship team building and team captain's leadership manual. <http://www.janssensportsleadership.com/resources>

Yukelson, D., & Rose, R. (2014). The Psychology of Ongoing Excellence: An NCAA Coach's Perspective on Winning Consecutive Multiple National Championships, *Journal of Sport Psychology in Action*, 5(1), 44-58.

EXCERPT FROM READING: Although coaches often talk about the importance of building a championship team, very few studies have addressed the mindset and psychosocial dynamics of teams winning multiple championships in a row. The purpose of this reflective report is to explore from a psychology of coaching perspective, factors perceived to be most paramount in building and sustaining a repeatable championship team culture over time.

Additional Activities:

1. Building a Positive Team Culture & Expectations Discussion:

- What values do we want as the foundation for our team culture?
- What attitudes and beliefs about our sport, competition, and team do we want to hold?
- What are the team goals we want to pursue?
- How should athletes and coaches treat each other?
- What can we expect from our team leaders? Who should be a leader?
- How should members of this team treat each other?
- What kind of atmosphere do we want on our team? How do we make that happen?
- What are our team expectations? What should we expect of each other?
- What team rules should we have? Who should make team rules? How should we hold each other accountable when a rule is violated?
- When a member of our team is struggling or makes a mistake, like when Brandi Chastain kicked a goal into her own net, how do we want to respond? How do we want our teammates to respond? (note: want to develop a response plan, so athletes don't REACT. Responding to adversity is different than reacting).

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