

Setting a Positive Team Culture

Purpose: Your value is greater than how you play.

We walk away knowing, winning is important, but losing should never have an impact on an individual's identity.



Action / Challenge Points

- Have fun: Play training games that make the team laugh – as a coach, join in – don't be afraid to look a little silly at times.
- Foster an environment of trust: What can you do to create trust between team members? Maybe agree to some team values for everyone to adhere to.
- Change your language
 - Use E Tū Tāngata language in your coaching
 - Point out when team members have demonstrated team values
 - Catch people out when they put themselves or others down
- Go through E Tū Tāngata and the three strands as a coaching staff before doing it with the team

Often in sports the competition becomes the main thing.

As coaches, our identity and the standard we expect is based on results; getting the win at the end of the day becomes the most important thing. Because of this, we can view our players as 'robotic athletes' rather than people.

When we react to our players based on their performance it subtly communicates that their worth is based on their performance and that the only importance or value they have to the team is when they can perform at their best.

Competing is important, but we need to create team cultures where a player's identity isn't defined by their performance. Winning creates a certain sense of euphoria, whereas losing can be deeply disappointing. The difference is that while a player can be disappointed in their performance, they shouldn't internalise that and believe that they are a disappointment. A loss shouldn't devastate a person, but instead inspire them to try again.

Quade Cooper returned to international rugby on September 13, 2021 after a significant hiatus from the Australian squad. Cooper kicked the winning goal in the final moments of the game against South Africa. After the game he was interviewed and asked about his time not playing. He spoke about how friend and fellow rugby player, Sonny Bill Williams, taught him that rugby is just a game; no matter what the result, life goes on. Cooper said this realisation meant big moments in the game become far less intimidating; it freed him up to give his best performance because he wasn't stressing about the outcome.

