

CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

The S.P.A.D.E Solution for Coaches



As coaches, we often find ourselves pulled in many different directions between athletes, other coaches, parents, and committee members. As a result, we are often required to have challenging conversations on a range of topics. Feedback from coaches at the 2018 ASCTA Conference was that these conversations become a huge distraction to core business: coaching. So, why is this the case? Why is it so hard? Most of the time, it is because we don't have a plan and we dive into solving the problem. But **your job is not to solve the problem. Your job is to acknowledge the problem and bring the person to the choice point.**

S	Safe Environment	Is the meeting space safe? Will the person feel somewhat comfortable? Am I projecting safety via my non-verbals, tone and seating posture? "Athletes want to know you care before they care what you know" ~ Theodore Roosevelt
P	Performance Focused	It's either Personal or Performance. Your communication will dictate this. Stick to the performance facts. What do you have data on? E.g., "Your times in your main sets have been slower over the past month and I want to help you improve. It could be related to rest, illness, relationships, fuel, belief, etc."
A	Ask for their Perspective	Ask the athlete what their perspective is and what they think it could be? This gives the athlete some ownership. If they shrug their shoulders or say "I don't know", then ask them to rate their rest, fuel, mindset and relationships out of 10 and see if this opens up some conversation.
D	Don't Decide for Them	This is the Choice Point!!! Don't leap forward. Don't try to solve it. Ask the question, take a deep breath and wait . . . (patiently). "Do you want to improve this area?" "Do you want to make a change?" "Do you want to feel better?"
E	Encourage Action	If the person chooses to take action, then your job is to bring the right support person into the team. Don't send them off to solve the problem on their own! Let them see this is a team effort and together the problem can be solved.

COACHING RESOURCE

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