

Conflict Resolution Approach for Coaches.

1. **Recognize the Conflict:** As a coach, be vigilant about recognizing any signs of conflict among players, parents, or coaching staff. Conflicts may arise from differences in playing time, communication issues, misunderstandings, or other factors.
2. **Listen Actively:** When players or parents approach you with concerns or conflicts, practice active listening. Give them your full attention, maintain eye contact, and avoid interrupting. Let them express their feelings and perspectives without judgment. Communicate the 24 hour and email rule with your team parents.
3. **Schedule a Private Meeting:** If the conflict involves individual players or parents, schedule a private meeting with each party involved. This ensures a safe and confidential space for open communication.
4. **Remain Calm and Neutral:** As the mediator, maintain a calm and neutral demeanor during the meeting. Avoid taking sides and refrain from emotionally reacting to the conflict.
5. **Allow All Parties to Share:** Encourage all parties involved to express their viewpoints and concerns. Let them share their perspectives, feelings, and thoughts about the situation.
6. **Identify the Root of the Conflict:** Help the parties identify the underlying issues that led to the conflict. Often, conflicts are not just about the surface-level disagreement but may be rooted in deeper concerns.
7. **Find Common Ground:** Look for areas of agreement or common ground among the parties. Finding shared interests can help in moving towards a resolution.
8. **Generate Possible Solutions:** Work with the parties to brainstorm potential solutions to the conflict. Encourage creativity and openness to different ideas.
9. **Evaluate the Solutions:** Evaluate the proposed solutions together with the involved parties. Discuss the pros and cons of each option and consider how they align with the overall goals and values of the team.
10. **Choose a Resolution:** With input from all parties, choose the most suitable resolution to the conflict. Ensure that the chosen solution is fair, reasonable, and addresses the root cause of the conflict.
11. **Implement the Resolution:** Once a resolution is agreed upon, put it into action. Clearly communicate the plan to all relevant parties and ensure that everyone understands their roles in the resolution process.
12. **Follow Up:** Monitor the situation after the resolution has been implemented. Check in with the involved parties to see how they are progressing and if any further adjustments are needed.
13. **Reinforce Positive Behavior:** Encourage positive behavior and respectful communication among players, parents, and coaching staff moving forward. Recognize and acknowledge efforts to resolve conflicts in a constructive manner.

14. **Learn from the Experience:** Reflect on the conflict resolution process and learn from the experience. Consider how future conflicts can be prevented or addressed more effectively.
15. **Communicate Season Expectations:** Schedule a beginning of the season and mid-season parent meeting to discuss season expectations and to touch base and give parents an open forum to hear your goals and feedback on how the season is going.
16. **Document all Team Issues:** Keep a written record with dates, times and those involved regarding team complaints and disciplinary issues.

Remember, conflict is a natural part of any team environment, and how it is handled can have a significant impact on team dynamics. By following these steps, youth hockey coaches can promote a positive and cohesive team culture and foster healthy relationships among all team members.

