Climbing the Tree of Mastery

Contributed by Joe Slowinski
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The Positive Coaching Alliance has developed a metaphor for positive coaching entitled the E.L.M. Tree of Mastery. This can be used with your bowlers to help them have a more positive outlook that will lead to more self-esteem, higher performance and a better rapport with you as the coach. Most importantly, this philosophy will help you as the coach. Climbing the Tree of Mastery(From Positive Coaching Alliance , 2006)

To help understand the way that we achieve mastery, we use the example of a tree that we call the Tree of Mastery. If you climb the Tree of Mastery you will be successful.

We say that the Tree of Mastery is an ELM tree because there are three things you need to do to climb the Tree of Mastery:

E is for Effort. We want to give our best effort every time we come out on the field. I am more concerned that we try our hardest than I am if we win. We could win against a weak team without giving it our best effort, and that doesn't really mean anything.

On the other hand we could play a team that was stronger than we are and try our very hardest and lose. I would be proud of us in that case because we were acting like a winner by trying our hardest even though the other team ended up winning the game.

So the first part of the ELM tree is E for Effort.

L is for Learning. We want to continue learning and improving every week in practice and every time we play a game. If we continue to learn, we will get better, and that is more important than whether or not we are better than some other team.

We could be better than another team without learning and improving if that team is a weak team. And we could be weaker than another team but be learning a lot and getting better all the time. It's more important to me that we learn and improve than it is to beat a team that isn't very good. And it's more important that we learn and improve even if we lose to a team that is stronger than we are.

So the second part of the ELM tree is L for Learning.

M is for Mistakes. Most people think it's bad to make a mistake. But mistakes are part of the learning process. You can't learn something as complicated as baseball if you are afraid to make a mistake. And people that are afraid to make a mistake often don't even try very hard.

I want you to know that it is okay to make a mistake on this team. We want to learn from our mistakes and not let them discourage us or keep us from working hard. So, is it okay to make a mistake on this team?

Yes, it is. And the third part of the ELM tree is M for it's okay to make a Mistake.

Acting like a winner involves three things. It means:

> Giving your best effort every time,

> Continuing to learn and improve, and

> Not letting mistakes (or fear of making a mistake) stop you.

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