



Developing a Winning Team

Bum Phillips Head Coach, Houston Oilers

Bum Phillips was kind enough to share some of his thoughts about leadership what makes a winning team during an interview at his ranch.

Bum has been a role model to many of us and epitomized the "Love Ya Blue" era for Houston football fans.

The following is a glimpse of his wisdom.



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My Definition of a Coach

There are Three Basic Types of People:
Good, Medium and Mediocre.

The Coach helps each one move up a notch.



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A Great Team Begins with Management

- A well managed team does not realize they are being managed.
- I've always worked harder for someone I like.
- A Team will play harder for management who cares about them.
- Suggestions are Always Better than Commands.
- Good Management Suggestions Build Trust.



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Be careful when selecting the people you hire.

- It's better to have a player who is not brilliant but wants to move up in life than someone who is smart but doesn't have any ambition.
- It's better to have a player who won't do what you say than one who will only do what you say. You can usually straighten out the first one, but there is little hope for the second.
- The team is known by the worst member, not the best player.



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The Coach's Accountability:

- If I sent in a play and it didn't work out, I didn't send the right play.
- If I gave a direction and they didn't follow it, I didn't explain well enough.
- Always speak plainly and make sure the team understands what you mean.
- Your directions have to make sense to the team.



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Understanding the Players:

- We all have different work habits and Attitudes. Learn who you have.
- You have to know who needs a pat on the Butt or a pat on the Back to get them going.
- You have to make the job interesting enough to make them want to keep working.
- If a Player doesn't perform, your job is to figure out why... You don't give up on them.
- Be determined enough to help them change.



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Motivation:

- Everyone wants to please someone, to play for someone. Care enough to make it you.
- People work hard for their family. Help them understand it is not just a job.
- Consider all suggestions and use them if at all possible. If players make suggestions, that means they are interested and you can progress together.

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Motivation:

- A High School Superintendent friend once asked me to coach his team.
- That was the laziest bunch of kids I ever saw. They just didn't care.
- I started bragging on them as individuals and as a team. I actually had to lie to them...
- As they got better I bragged more and more.
- Pretty soon they started acting good.
- We ended up with a winning season.



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At the end of the interview, I asked Bum to share his most memorable moments.

“After our first NFL Championship loss, 50,000 people were waiting for us in the Astrodome. The next year, after losing the chance for the Superbowl again, 85,000 people showed up. They had to be there six hours ahead of us. People were lined up all along the road, out in their yards, everywhere, at 10:00- 11:00 at night. That made us all feel good. ”



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“That must have made you very proud, Bum,” I said.

He replied simply, not taking credit,

“I was one of them.”