



Evaluation of PCA Online Coach Courses for Amateur Athletic Union
(AAU)
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Headline Findings

Coaches who participate in the online PCA trainings are statistically more likely than other coaches to feel more prepared in specific ways to use tools and techniques with their players to improve their resiliency, their sportsmanship, and their character on and off the field. The PCA training sticks with coaches, and they report putting it into practice.

- 96% of trained coaches believe the PCA training gives them the tools to help their players get better at their sport.
- 95% of trained coaches believe the PCA training gives them the tools to get their players to support each other and work together as a team.
- Two-thirds of trained coaches use PCA tools "most of the time" or "always."
- Approximately 90% of trained coaches would "probably" or "definitely" recommend PCA training to other coaches.

Introduction

Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) launched an online course for youth sports coaches in 2010, *Double-Goal Coach®: Coaching for Winning and Life Lessons*. This training introduces concepts such as "filling athletes' emotional tanks," "honoring the game," and taking a "mastery approach." The goal of the course is to give coaches tools so their athletes both perform better and have a more enjoyable, character-building sports experience. In 2011, See Change Evaluation analyzed pre-post surveys returned by more than 400 coaches who took the course during 2010-2011 and found statistically significant¹ improvements in coaches' self-reported awareness and usage of Double-Goal concepts and tools.

¹ "Statistical significance" refers to the probability that a difference observed after the online course is not merely a fluke. A *p* value indicates how likely it is that the difference could have

The present report summarizes See Change's analysis of 588 surveys from coaches who took *Coaching for Winning and Life Lessons* and 150 surveys from coaches who took PCA's second course, *Double-Goal Coach®: Culture, Practice and Games*, during the 2011-2012 school year. The *Culture, Practice and Games* course includes footage of top professional coaches and athletes explaining how to cultivate a team culture of excellence. Specific sections focus on creating dynamic practices, and strategies for getting the most from athletes — as players and as people — before, during and after games. The goal is to enable coaches to provide an environment for athletes to thrive, love sports, and reach their potential.

Responding coaches in this study were from the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), which has engaged their coaches in a broad program of PCA online training. However, these survey results are generalizable to other groups of coaches taking the training online. These AAU coaches responded to the online surveys six weeks after completing the courses, so most respondents had time to put the PCA tools to use.

Quantitative Results

For both courses, coaches had significantly higher average scores for their self-perceived level of preparation after the courses, when compared to average pre-course scores of all coaches who have taken the courses since their inception.

Consistent with See Change's 2011 findings, large majorities of coaches who took the courses this year feel prepared to use Double-Goal concepts and tools with their athletes. The following table illustrates these findings:

been observed by chance. For example, if a difference is significant at $p < .001$, then there is a less than 0.1% chance that the difference was observed because of random fluctuations.

Percent of 588 *Coaching for Winning and Life Lessons* participants who feel “quite” or “extremely” prepared to...

...help my players get better at this sport.	96%
...get my players to support each other and work together as a team.	95%
...use my sport to teach life lessons.	94%
...motivate players to try hard in practice and games	93%
...get my players to support each other and work together as a team.	93%
...help my players bounce back quickly from mistakes.	92%
...help my players deal with nervousness and fear of failure.	90%
...deal with behavior problems on my team.	85%
...involve and manage parents to positively support the team.	78%

Percent who use the tools from the PCA workshop “sometimes,” “most of the time” or “always” 92%

Of these, percent who use the PCA tools “most of the time” or “always” 67%

Percent who feel the training impacted them “somewhat,” “quite a bit,” or “a lot” 91%

Of these, percent who feel the training impacted them “quite a bit” or “a lot” 60%

A high percentage of coaches would recommend PCA training to their peers. In DGC1, 30% of coaches would “probably” recommend PCA to their fellow coaches, and 59% would “definitely” recommend it, for a total of 89% of respondents.

Percent of 150 *Culture, Practice and Games* participants who feel “quite” or “extremely” prepared to...

...explain my coaching philosophy to players and parents.	94%
...create written practice plans that will facilitate dynamic practices.	94%
...utilize opening and closing rituals in practice.	94%
...fill players’ emotional tanks in practice.	94%
...set my team up for meaningful games through pre-game activities.	94%
...handle blow-out games in a highly productive and positive way.	94%
... lead effective post-game conversations.	94%
...build the kind of team culture that I want.	92%
...utilize signature statements, trigger words and reward actions to help build my team culture.	88%

Percent who use the tools from the PCA workshop “sometimes,” “most of the time” or “always” 95%

Of these, percent who use the PCA tools “most of the time” or “always” 73%

Percent who feel the training impacted them “somewhat,” “quite a bit,” or “a lot” 97%

Of these, percent who feel the training impacted them “quite a bit” or “a lot” 73%

In DGC2, 26% of coaches would “probably” recommend PCA to their fellow coaches, and 67% would “definitely” recommend it.

Consistent with the 2010-2011 evaluation findings, coaches’ satisfaction with their coaching and their judgment of their players’ performance level was significantly *lower* after taking the course (when compared to all coaches who have taken the pre-course survey). For example, in the DGC2 training, pre-surveys indicated that coaches’ satisfaction level was “quite” or “extremely” high for 95% of respondents, while post-surveys indicated that only 85% of coaches would rate their satisfaction at those levels. Similarly, 94% of coaches rated their players’ performance as “quite” or “extremely” high at the first survey administration, but only 71% of coaches rated their players’ performance that highly on the post-survey.

This finding could indicate that coaches’ expectations of themselves and standards for their players have been raised by the courses. Leadership and character building programs can cause individuals to become more reflective and thoughtful, as well as to set higher expectations for themselves. Therefore, a lower rating of their own performance (or of their athletes’ performance) could be an indicator that the first training sets a high bar, and sparks a desire to strive for more from themselves — which could be a favorable outcome of PCA’s program.

Qualitative Results

Two themes emerged from course participants’ open-ended comments. The first was simply praise for both courses. The overwhelming majority of comments were highly positive, with many coaches saying that “they wouldn’t change a thing” about the courses. Others noted specific ways the course had affected their awareness and/or behavior with athletes. One coach put it this way:

The PCA training impacted me in the area of communicating in a positive way during games and practices. I find that by using trigger words and phrase[s,] it assist[s] me with keeping my players focus[ed] on the task at hand. It keeps me focus[ed] too! Because it’s easy to los[e] focus when things are not going as plan[ned] during practice/game. — Respondent #88

The second theme was suggestions for improvement of the courses. The most common suggestions were addressing individual sports such as gymnastics; providing more tools to deal with parents, especially difficult ones; shortening the courses; and providing more skills for dealing with very young athletes (in contrast to the professional coaches who deal with adults).

Summary

Consistent with the 2010-2011 evaluation, these 2011-2012 survey findings demonstrate that coaches who complete the PCA online training are well-equipped to teach youth athletes to strive to win while learning life lessons.

Ninety-six percent of trained coaches believe the **PCA training gives them the tools to help their players get better at their sport**. Ninety-five percent of trained coaches believe the **PCA training gives them the tools to get their players to support each other and work together as a team**.

On the post-surveys, **coaches were statistically more likely than on the pre-surveys to report feeling more prepared in specific ways to use tools and techniques with their players to improve their resiliency, their sportsmanship, and their character on and off the field**.

The PCA training sticks with coaches, and they report putting it into practice. **Two-thirds of trained coaches use PCA tools “most of the time” or “always.”** **Approximately 90% of trained coaches would “probably” or “definitely” recommend PCA training to other coaches.**

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