

## Coaching your team through finals: THE IC POLICY:

For those teams who have made the finals, good luck for the next few weeks. Remember it *is just a game*.

In the previous newsletter I discussed the clubs policy on giving players equal court time. This policy is not as strict for the finals. HOWEVER, I did not write this policy! My personal policy is to give every player the same court time regardless of the game. Sure you might have a better chance of winning with your best players on the court, but at what cost? Consider the two alternatives:

Using the 'Win at all costs' attitude	Giving all players a 'fair go'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- You have a higher chance of winning.</li><li>- <i>If</i> you win: You will destroy the self confidence of the lesser players you benched all game.</li><li>- If you loose: You will destroy the self confidence of the lesser players you benched all game.</li><li>- Lesser players won't strive to improve their game next season because of the little faith you showed in their ability during the finals. You have convinced them they are no good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- You might win anyway.</li><li>- Players derive self confidence from the faith the coach has shown in them during a close important game.</li><li>- This may make the lesser players actually play better on the day.</li><li>- It will encourage players to improve next season as the coach showed faith in them last season during a crunch game.</li><li>- A good coach doesn't need a trophy to show them the improvement their players have made.</li></ul>

The reason I write on this is because I have unfortunately coached a grand final using both coaching styles. The first one I coached in I could not control myself - yelling at refs, complaining about every call and keeping the best players on the court for the whole game. We won the flag but I knew we had lost that day. The players celebrated, but they knew exactly why they were being kept off the court. It was not until the presentation that it sunk in what I had done.

The second grand final I tried to be more tactical. I prepared my bench rotations before the game so that every player could have equal court time AND I could play the three best players for the first and last three minutes of the game. We won the grand final and the celebrations were genuine. The players and the parents knew exactly what I was doing, and appreciated that they had been given a fair go.

As far as I am concerned, I have only coached the one grand final win.

So try to resist the pressure parents may place on the importance of winning a final, because at the end of the day the team's real victory is the improvement they have made throughout the season.

### Training during the finals:

At this late stage of the season, there is little you can teach players. Perhaps remind your players of the plays, but that's about all.

Instead, get players shooting as much as you can during training. Encourage them to practice during the week in their back yard or at a local school. The more practice the better.