



SHOW ME YOU MEAN IT
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STANDARDS - YOU AND YOUR COACH

COMMUNICATION

Say it out loud, say it early, and say it in a way your coach can actually help with.

SAME FOR EVERYONE

7 MIN READ

01

WHY IT MATTERS

Please don't assume I can read your mind. I'm not very good at it, so I don't even try.

I'll put real effort into remembering everything you tell me, but you have to say it for me to hear it. The injury you're hiding, the thing at school, the fact you're cooked this week, the position you hate: if I don't know, I can't plan around it. And I can't help solve a problem until I understand what it is.

02

THE STANDARD

FROM YOU

- **Updates come before the session**, not after.
- **Try the instruction properly** before you give your opinion on it.
- **Disagree respectfully.** Describe the specific problem, calmly.
- **Bring a possible solution** with the problem.
- **Big conversations get their own time**, not a 30-second water break.
- **Tired, angry thoughts get slept on** before they get said.

WHAT YOU GET FROM ME

- **Straight answers.** If I'm not seeing it, I'll tell you: "I'm not seeing it in training. It's not in your tracker." Honest, specific, never personal.
- **Clear lines.** I'll always tell you whether something is negotiable or not (see [Team Standards](#)).
- **An open door.** Bring it calmly and at the right time, and I'll listen properly and we'll work it out together.
- **No grudges.** If you're not ready yet, we stay at this level. I'll be here when you are.
- **Replies between 10am and 8pm**, in person, by WhatsApp or by email. Late-night messages get answered the next day, which is usually better for both of us.

03

HOW TO DO IT

STEP 01

GIVE UPDATES BEFORE THE SESSION

- **Updates:** injuries, sickness, a bad night's sleep, mental health, even "I'm bored of this". Tell me before class starts so I can adjust. After the session is too late to do anything about it.
- **Questions about the session** (why this game, why this drill, why these partners): before class, in the breaks, or after.

STEP 02

TRY IT BEFORE YOU GIVE FEEDBACK

I'm always happy to talk about practice design and training choices. I ask that you **attempt the instruction before you give me your opinion or feedback.**

A lot of what we do feels strange the first few times. Games feel messy. A new position feels worse than your old one. That's what learning feels like. If you've genuinely tried it for a few sessions and still think it's not right for you, come and tell me. That's a conversation I respect. Skipping it because you don't think it works doesn't give either of us anything to work with.

STEP 03

REWORD IT SO I CAN HELP

You can always disagree with me. What I ask is respect: take the time, and be calm enough, to turn what you want to say into something I can work with. Describe the specific problem. It's hard when emotions are high, and that's exactly when it matters.

WHAT COMES OUT IN THE MOMENT	SAY THIS INSTEAD
"I think this is so stupid."	"Could you please explain how this makes me better?"
"This doesn't work."	"Coach, this hasn't worked for me in the past, and I'm not sure it's the best direction for my training."

WHAT COMES OUT IN THE MOMENT	SAY THIS INSTEAD
"This is all stupid and I hate it."	"I think I'm really overwhelmed with training and I can't handle it right now."
"This School isn't good enough."	"I feel stuck. Can we look at what I'm working on and who I'm training with?"
"I need better training partners."	"I'm struggling to get good rounds on my focus. Can you help me set up better ones?"
"You don't care about us."	"I'm really nervous about tomorrow and I need some help with it."
"I'm never going to win Worlds."	"I'm doubting myself this week. Can we talk about where I'm actually at?"

The second column isn't you being fake. It's you being specific, and specific is what lets me help.

STEP 04

BRING A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

As much as you can, bring a possible solution along with the problem, and your reasoning for it. Two heads are better than one, and I'd love your help solving your problems. It also shows me how you're thinking, so I can build something that fits you instead of a generic fix. Your solution doesn't have to be right. It just has to be yours.

THE SCRIPT

PROBLEM, CAUSE, IDEA, QUESTION

"Coach, can I grab five minutes after class? **I've noticed** I keep getting passed when I play De La Riva. **I think it's because** I lose the grip on the sleeve when they back step. **I was thinking** I could do the find-seven homework on sleeve grips this week and you watch a round on Thursday. **What do you reckon?**"

STEP 05

PICK THE RIGHT TIME

Some conversations need time to explore, and I won't have it during a 30-second break with forty people on the mat. I want to give you my full attention, so some things need to wait for the right time.

- **Quick question about the drill?** In the break. Fine.
- **"I'm thinking about my goals" or "something's not right"?** Ask for a time: "Can we talk after class, or tomorrow?"

- **The night before a comp?** Not the time to redesign anything. Tell me how you feel, then we talk properly after.
- **Straight after a loss?** Not the time either. Sleep first.

STEP 06

RAISE HARD THINGS EARLY AND CALMLY

Around month two of a hard camp, it's common to start thinking "this School isn't good enough", "I need better partners" or "I'm not getting better". Under pressure, almost everyone blames something outside themselves first. Those thoughts are mostly fatigue (see [Mindset](#)). Let them build for two weeks and they come out as a blow-up at your coach, often the night before a comp. That's very hard to take back.

DO THIS INSTEAD

HOW TO RAISE IT PROPERLY

1. **Notice it.** "That's the month-two voice."
2. **Sleep on it.** Decide nothing tonight. No texts, no posts.
3. **Write it down** in the morning. What exactly is the problem? Be specific.
4. **Check it.** Is it still true after a few good nights of sleep? Often it isn't.
5. **Still true?** Ask for a time to talk, use the script above, and bring an idea.
6. **Raise it early.** A small thing said in week one is easy. The same thing bottled for two weeks becomes a blow-up.

More on tired thoughts in [Mindset](#).

04

COMMON MISTAKES

- ✗ **Telling your coach about an injury after the session.** Tell them before class so the session can change.
- ✗ **Giving feedback on something you haven't tried.** Give it a few proper sessions first.
- ✗ **Saying how you feel instead of what the problem is.** "This is stupid" can't be fixed. "I keep losing the sleeve grip" can.
- ✗ **Bringing a big topic to a water break.** Ask for a time.

✗ **Redesigning the plan the night before a comp.** Say how you feel, then talk properly after.

✗ **Bottling it up for weeks.** Raise it early, calmly, with a possible solution.

✗ **Sending the angry message at midnight.** Sleep on it and send the specific version in the morning.

05

CHECKLIST

DO THIS

EVERY WEEK

- ☐ Told my coach about any niggle, sickness or bad week before the session.
- ☐ Tried every new instruction properly before giving my opinion.
- ☐ Asked at least one specific question.
- ☐ Brought a possible solution with any problem I raised.
- ☐ Slept on any angry or tired thought before saying it.