



Reframing Mistakes

Over the course of a game or practice, athletes will make mistakes - especially if they are under pressure or learning something new. When a coach believes that mistakes are not acceptable, athletes can play fearfully and be afraid to try anything new. This impacts their ability to learn and develop.

By creating a positive, supportive team environment, coaches have the power to help athletes reframe mistakes and treat them as growth opportunities. When athletes feel supported regardless if they make a mistake or not, they'll be more likely to:

- Feel engagement and enjoyment for the sport
- Attempt new skills and develop mastery
- Overcome mistakes and learn from them
- Support their teammates through rough patches

Coaches can:

- **Incorporate 'learning from mistakes' into a team philosophy** and use it daily to remind athletes that mistakes are a pathway to improvement
- **Teach athletes about 'mistake rituals'** - physical gestures they can use, individually or as a team, to overcome mistakes in the moment and refocus on the game. Encourage athletes to create a team mistake ritual to use throughout the season.
- **Praise effort and improvement over results** so athletes can focus on what they can control and feel successful, even if the result wasn't successful
- **Ask permission before providing specific feedback** to ensure athletes are ready to hear suggestions for improvement

