

## **Coaching the hearing-impaired athlete**

### **Best practice summary**

#### **Coaching for people with impairments, children coaching**

A hearing-impaired athlete is not a problem or a burden: think of them as a blessing, an opportunity to enrich communication skills. The goal of this presentation is to eradicate the misconceptions in coaching the hearing-impaired athlete, by providing coaches with a toolbox full of practical applications that will be called upon in many practice and game situations.

Not only will coaches learn how and when to advocate for their hearing-impaired athletes but they will gain new sets of skills to add to their already incredible coaching abilities, enabling them to have a deeper, more meaningful relationship with every member of their team. Addressing situational sport-specific examples is imperative in the coaches' learning process. The presentation includes bilateral, unilateral, cochlear implants, inability to wear an aid, and amplification examples. My catcher won't take off his helmet to catch a fly ball for fear his aids will fall out. My gymnast refuses to wear her aid when she is on the floor. My long jumper continues to get sand in her cochlear implant. My water polo player can't wear any device in the pool. The background noise on the amplifier is causing feedback for my athlete.

The speaker will address practical answers to simple questions for all types of hearing loss. What do you do in the rain? What about a child with unilateral hearing loss? How should cochlear implants in contact sports be handled? Why do hearing-impaired athletes misinterpret criticism? How can I get them to understand and follow directions? Do I need to notify officials and opponents? What about their teammates, what do they need to know? Why are facial expressions and body language so important? Why does my hearing-impaired athlete fatigue faster than my other players? I coach a water sport, or my hearing-impaired child won't wear their aids in a game setting?

Not every hearing-impaired child is the same; not every sport has the same roadblocks. By providing proven strategies, real-life situations, methods, and ideas, every coach and mentor will be empowered with the ability to coach hearing-impaired athletes. Adding the missing tools to a toolbox, and sharpening the ones already in them will help coaches feel confident in coaching the hearing-impaired child.

Hearing-impairment does not define a person, but it does positively or negatively affect their day-to-day living. Take the guesswork out of coaching hearing-impaired athletes: advocate, educate, and appreciate.