

2016 HOKA OneOne Endurance Crossroads Clinic  
Robert Groves – Building a Successful Team Atmosphere

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**BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL TEAM  
ATMOSPHERE**

**My Background**

- Graduated from Mission San Jose in 1985
- Graduated from Cal Poly in 1990
- Coached my kids in Soccer, Basketball and Baseball
- Started at Vista del Lago in 2009 with Mike Livingston
- Took over as Head Coach in 2012



**Culture**

- Team Culture starts at the top
  - Truly begins from the bottom up
  - Peanut taught me that in order to build a program, you have to start working on your Fresh-Soph Team!

### Caring Atmosphere

- “They will never care how much you know, until they know how much you care!”
  - First thing we established at Vista was a place where kids felt “safe.”
  - We talk to our kids about things other than running
  - Practice is a sanctuary
  - Our team is a Family

### Fun Atmosphere

- Without running being fun, they will quit or find another sport
  - Too many options today for kids
  - We have to “Win” them over

### Fun Atmosphere

- Fun things we do
  - Camp!
  - Donut Days
  - Photo Scavenger Hunt
  - Theme Days
    - Flag Short Friday
    - Crazy Short Friday for girls
    - Run-A-Thon Theme Runs

### Fun Atmosphere

- Masks
- Naming Workouts
  - Chico State Workout
  - Music Fartleks
  - “Marsh” Madness

### Fun Atmosphere

- Coachisms
- Movie Night
- Pool Parties and BBQ’s
- Road Trips

### Successful Atmosphere

- We concentrate on the “process” NOT the “outcome.”
  - We define success as doing all the little things on a daily basis that will make them better.
    - Did they stretch?
    - Did they do their Core?
    - Did they do their injury prevention exercises?
    - Did they get enough sleep the night before?
    - Did they log their miles on xcstats?

### Successful Atmosphere

- We concentrate on the “process” NOT the “outcome.”
  - We define success as doing all the little things on a daily basis that will make them better.
    - Did they do everything possible today to make themselves better tomorrow?
    - Did they run the workout “as prescribed?”
    - Did they do everything they could to get to the starting line prepared both mentally and physically?

### Successful Atmosphere

- We concentrate on the “process” NOT the “outcome.”
  - We do NOT pay attention to whatever anyone else is doing.
  - We cannot control what others are doing. We can only control what “WE” are doing.

### Successful Atmosphere

- We concentrate on the “process” NOT the “outcome.”
  - We celebrate the victories we have each day.
    - I really get excited for the kids when they do all the things we ask
    - We find the positives in each days workout
    - Cannot judge success based on their place in a race. Cannot control their competition. Can only control certain things.....And too many things are out of their control

### Cohesive Atmosphere

- Cross Country is a great team sport, but as coaches we cannot control the closeness of their relationships. That has to come from within the team.
  - So what do we do to bring the team together?

### Cohesive Atmosphere

- We select team leaders.
  - We attempt to teach the leaders that their role is to make everyone on the team a leader.
  - Must choose these leaders very carefully.

### Cohesive Atmosphere

- Pink Shorts.....

### Cohesive Atmosphere

- Pre-Race Circle and Relaxed Breathing

### Cohesive Atmosphere

- Team Stretching/ Rolling/ Rehab Time
  - Most important 30 minutes of practice to build a cohesive group.
  - Would be easier to leave practice, but this is the time they “really” come together!

### Cohesive Atmosphere

- Making “Big” feel “Small.”
  - Split athletes amongst coaching staff
  - I want every athlete to feel they are getting individual attention
  - The “Fist Bump!”

### Building Traditions

- I have the kids start traditions.....with my help.
  - My job is to keep these going

### Building Traditions

- Flag Short Friday
- Crazy socks on road trip shake out run
- Getting dressed up for dinner on road trip
- Alumni Christmas Run
- After League Finals the entire team goes to pizza
- Letters from Alumni to team night before State Meet

### Building Traditions

- End of the year banquet is about “team” and “Seniors.”
  - Senior Speeches
    - Let’s younger kids know what the program is really all about!

### Things Considering

- Pizza nights during season
- Not doing individual awards.....only team
- Senior BBQ or Dinner at the beginning of the season
- Senior lunch after graduation

### Thank You!!!

- Questions?