

BUILDING TRUST-BASED RELATIONSHIPS IS KEY FOR EFFECTIVE COACHING

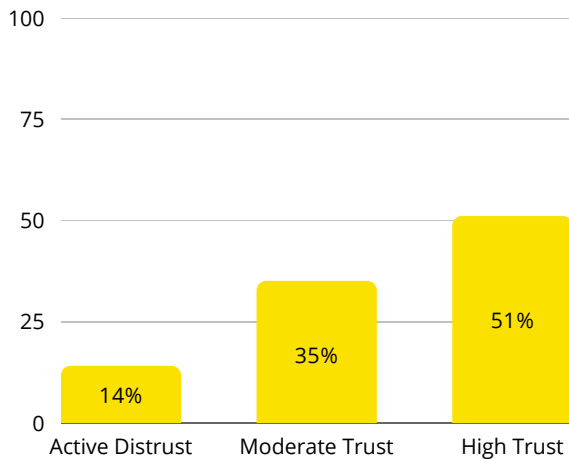
A WHITE PAPER BY ECSELL SPORTS



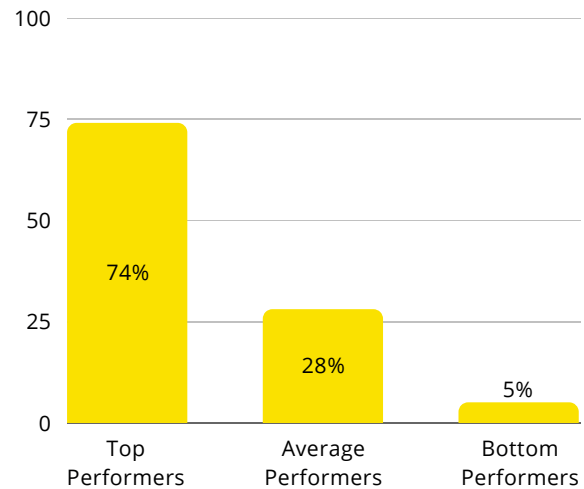
HOW TRUST IS A CRITICAL COMPONENT OF COACHING EFFECTIVENESS

This paper explores the crucial concept of trust in leadership and how coaches, athletic directors, and other leaders must prioritize building trust-based relationships with their players and coaching staff to be effective. The data, sourced from Ecsell Sport's research on leadership effectiveness, reveals the significance of trust in strong coaching and its correlation with student-athlete happiness, growth, and overall performance. This paper aims to provide athletic programs with insights into the importance of trust in leadership and practical strategies to foster trust-based relationships with leaders and their team members.

LEVEL OF TRUST THAT STUDENT-ATHLETES EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR COACHES



PROPORTION OF HIGH TRUST BY OVERALL COACH PERFORMANCE



INTRODUCTION

Trust is the firm belief in the character, reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something. In the context of athletic programs, trust is a fundamental factor that shapes the dynamics between both coaches and their athletes, and leaders and their coaching staff. Trust-based relationships contribute to improved performance, increased engagement, and overall happiness of student-athletes. This paper explores the findings of Ecsell Sports' research to highlight the importance of trust in coaching effectiveness.

trust *noun*

1. the firm belief in the character, reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something

TRUST LEVELS AMONG STUDENT-ATHLETES

Ecsell Sports' research revealed interesting insights into student-athletes' trust levels towards their coaches. Alarming, only about half of athletes place strong trust in their coaches, and a significant portion, accounting for 14% of athletes, actively do not trust their coaches.

This is notable because, unsurprisingly, the proportion of highly trusted coaches directly correlates with overall coaching performance, with 74% of top-performing coaches, 28% of average coaches, and only 5% of bottom coaches being highly trusted by their athletes.

FACTORS INFLUENCING TRUST

The research identified several factors that strongly correlate with high levels of trust in coaches. These include the coach's ability to:

- Create a fun and positive experience for athletes as a result of participating in the sport
- Show genuine care and concern for athletes as individuals beyond their roles in the sport
- Demonstrate strong listening skills that help players feel heard and valued
- Challenge the athlete to grow their skills beyond what they may expect of themselves

IMPACT ON ATHLETE HAPPINESS

Perhaps the finding of most contemporary significance is the direct correlation between a coach's ability to create trust-based relationships and the happiness of student-athletes. When athletes trust their coach, they are 21x more likely to report having fun. Moreover, the impact of fun goes beyond surface-level experiences; it contributes to athletes' holistic happiness and augments the quality of their participation. This dimension of happiness assumes a pivotal role as a reliable proxy for engagement. Thus, when athletes trust their coaches, it substantiates their heightened engagement in the sport, culminating in improved performance.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are suggested for leaders and coaches to foster trust-based relationships with their coaching staff and student-athletes:

- Find ways to balance the inherent competition of athletics with the joyful aspect of experiencing the sport
- Value athletes and team members as individuals beyond the production value they bring to the sport
- Take time to listen to athletes and team members so they know that their perspectives are seen as valuable by coaches and leaders
- Invest in research-based coaching and leadership programs that quantify the impact of coaches on their student-athletes

CONCLUSION

The data from Ecsell Sports' research reinforces the critical role of trust in leadership and coaching effectiveness. Building trust-based relationships with athletes and coaching staff is essential for leaders at all levels to cultivate a positive environment, foster athlete engagement, and drive overall success.

Leaders must recognize the importance of trust and incorporate strategies that prioritize trust-building within their leadership approach. By doing so, they can enhance their program's performance and create the best possible experience for student-athletes and coaches alike.

ABOUT ECSELL SPORTS

Ecsell Sports, a division of Ecsell Institute, is a research organization that helps athletic directors, coaches and club directors improve the experience of their student-athletes by quantifying coaching and leadership effectiveness.

[Learn more about our research here](#) »

