

# Using the Case Method in Teamwork Intelligence

Case Study's are used in The Academy for Sport Leadership's *Teamwork Intelligence* (TI) program because they allow us to bring the complexities of the team building process (for example, the day-to-day pressures, interpersonal conflicts, task failure, team adversities, and decisions that players and coaches confront everyday) into the classroom, just as in real life experience. Nothing replaces learning from experience; however, cases are an extraordinary way to simulate, for learning purposes, real life in the classroom setting.

The learning process embedded in each case helps the student-athlete improve their ability to construct exceptional and effective interpersonal relationships. Each case provides a platform for the student-athlete to *practice* applying personal insight and experience to real team building. The TI cases focus on individual, interpersonal, team, and leadership effectiveness within the team context. And the very practice of thinking and talking together is, by its nature, a real-life experience.

Communication is the lifeblood of every relationship. Conversations are the connectivity that binds us together. The *practice* of talking and thinking together improves the individual and team's ability to find solutions to interpersonal conflicts and negative social situations and settings.

It is important for the student-athlete to understand that all behavior is caused, motivated, and goal-directed. There is rarely one correct way to solve "people problems." Often the key to solving a problem in a case is in figuring out how the social context or social situation is triggering seemingly irrational behavior.

Every team discussion of a case study brings to light differing ideas and viewpoints. The expectation should be that through conversation the team takes time to explore, examine, and evaluate the perspectives suggested by team members during the conversation. The purpose is to make the invisible (mental models) visible. The goal is to "uncover" the underlying structures of how we think, what we see, and how we interact with teammates and coaches. Making these models visible and seeing one's self in action, in a team setting, provides the student-athlete with a deeper awareness of why people behave the way we do. This helps team members understand why their team is effective or ineffective.

Learning from case studies requires thorough preparation before class, and active participation in class. It is recommend that student-athletes and coaches prepare for case discussions by answering the discussion questions found in each case study. Next, the student-athlete should answer each of the five "depth" questions individually, or as a small group within the team.

## **The Teamwork Intelligence Five Depth Questions**

1. Briefly outline the relevant facts in the case.
2. Define the problem that needs to be solved (in one or two sentences).
3. Identify the /a cause of the problem.
4. Identify alternative solutions.
5. Identify one best solution and try to highlight the actions and intended consequences of this decision.