

教練哲學

——2015年運動哲學國際研討會演講稿

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摘 要

過去日本典型的運動指導，一般來說都是教練給予選手命令，選手遵從命令的指導方式。然而這樣的狀況最近開始產生變化。針對現在的小朋友，再使用過去的指導方式是越來越行不通的。仍然依照過去那嚴酷的方式來進行指導的教練，會與無法接受如此訓練的小朋友們產生極大的隔閡。當今的日本，從事運動的族群可二分為以運動的頂尖層級為目標的人士，以及以遊憩為目的而運動的人士，形成高度化與大眾化的兩極化。在針對以競技運動的頂尖為目標的小朋友的日本教練學上，其中之一的問題點為，可說是從小開始的過度教學。為使細微的技術、個人的技術、固定的模式能夠養成習慣，即便是小朋友，也缺少許多遊戲或其他運動項目的體驗，只專門從事單一的運動項目。在如此的現況下，講者嘗試提出幾個教練學中必要的重點：第一項，需要培育選手的自主性；第二個必要事項為，針對選手個人的基礎的訓練；第三，協助改善選手或隊伍。針對上述重點，演講內容將包含講者平日所累積的經驗，並加上日本電視節目中介紹的教練實例來進行說明。

關鍵詞：日本教練學，教練學問題，教練學的必要，選手優先，選手的自主性

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Phylosophy of Coaching: Keynote Speech of the 2015 International Conference on the Philisophy of Sport (National Taiwan Normal University on Nov. 14-15, 2015)

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1.Past Japanese Coaching

First, I'd like to talk about typical Japanese sports instruction in the past. A coach would give an order to a player. These orders are, for instance, "Raise your feet higher," "Keep your lower back low," "Move faster," "Repeat it 10 times," etc. I think the difference between advice and an order is determined by whether a player has the freedom to think independently. For example, when advice is given, the player can think, but when an order is given, the player cannot think; instead, he merely says "yes" and follows the order. Eventually, the player will not think any more about his actions. A player rarely proposes alternatives and rarely attempts to discuss the order as a result of this "one-way traffic" style of coaching. Eventually, a player will only take orders that have already been decided. When a coach gives an order and continues such a practice, to which the player follows, the practice gradually becomes more and more severe but the player cannot say "no" to that severe practice.

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2.Past Japanese Background

Now, I will explain the contextual background regarding why Japanese sports instruction was performed using such one-sided orders. After its defeat in World War II, Japan was initially in a state of poverty but then grew economically. Many Japanese people had the feeling that if they worked hard, they would become rich and succeed. The success of Japanese sportspeople at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 gave courage to Japanese people. In particular, the gold medal earned by the Japanese female volleyball team as a result of strenuous practice became a Japanese symbol of success through hard work. Sports animations related to such “heroic efforts” were created prolifically after the Tokyo Olympics, and they gained tremendous popularity among young people. Children were enthusiastic about these animations, and Japanese people became convinced that sport requires strenuous practice, and that players always believe, follow, and obey their coaches. Children’s sports activities were performed in teams at school, and schoolteachers played the role of sports coaches. Teachers were greatly respected at that time, and so, children were told that they should always obey the teacher. Therefore, even if a teacher became a sports coach, it was natural that the children would follow the teacher’s orders.

3.Background Nowadays

However, this scenario has been changing recently. There is abundance in Japanese life today. Children can have whatever they want. Parents spend

more time doting on their children and showering them with affection because births are rare, that is, due to the low birthrate, and the number of spoiled children has increased. The time spent by children in supplemental schools and lessons has also increased, while the time for free play has decreased. The appliances that children can use by themselves have proliferated, such as cell phones, games, and music players. In this way, chances to increase children's independence and free ideas are gradually decreasing. When I was a child, we had a great deal of free time after school, and we played tag and sports because we had nothing else to do. But today, children have many things to do, and so, we cannot expect them to play sports automatically. Only children who are provided with an exercise-friendly environment by their parents can engage in sports activities. Since the social status of parents has risen, the trend of teachers and coaches being respected has decreased. There has been an increase in parents talking with their children about the teacher's method of teaching and criticizing their teacher or coach at home. Unlike the old days, children do not want to play sports automatically and do not always obey the coach.

4. Japanese Player Now

As the environment for children changes, sports coaching does not operate as it did in the past. For example, if a sports coach makes a child engage in monotonous and boring basic practice, or forces strenuous practice upon a child, or if a child barely participates in a game because his skill is poor, the child will leave the sport immediately because he or she cannot tolerate such a situation. In fact, my daughter had begun playing volleyball by the age

of 10, but the team practice was severe and monotonous, and we were too busy to attend practice four days a week; therefore, we decided that my daughter would stop playing in the team. I was helping with, and observing the practice as a parent, and I thought that the training was boring; therefore, I agreed with my daughter's desire to leave the team.

5.A Change in Japanese Coaching

Thus, the one-sided and severe method of teaching that was previously mainstream in Japan is gradually becoming unacceptable. Today's coaches are those players who previously accepted conventional severe instruction. The instruction was appropriate for them and those players grew up to be coaches, trying to instruct children as they were instructed. However, today's children cannot easily follow such old teaching methods. People are also becoming increasingly intolerant of physical punishment that previously had tacit approval and was permitted. When the Japanese female national judo team had a training camp the year before last, some players accused the coach of using physical punishment, and the coach was fired. There is also an example of a high school sports team member who recorded an incident of his coach using physical punishment with a cell phone camera, and the coach was forced to resign. Thus, there is a large gap between coaches who try to teach in the old severe way and the players who cannot accept that. Coaches cannot instruct their players using severity, fear, and physical punishment any more.

6. Change in Japanese Sports Player Distribution

Next, I am going to speak about the transition of sports levels and their popularization in Japan. Formerly, it was thought that the sports level rose as the population of sports players increased, because if the population of sports players increased, people who had the aptitude and wanted to progress would raise the sports level by competing with each other. Formerly, most sportsmen and sportswomen wanted to progress, and so, the distribution of the sports population was shaped like a triangle. However, it is thought that the triangle has now been distorted. Its shape seems to extend at the top and sides as shown in the figure. I think the extension to the top has led to the extension to the sides. For example, it was previously possible to win an Olympic gold medal by performing C-level difficulty gymnastics, but now, you are required to perform F or G-level difficulty gymnastics in order to win an Olympic medal. The level of athletic sport is far more advanced than previously. Therefore, to reach the top, special practice and training are required from infancy. Only those children who begin to learn sport early, have an appropriate practice environment, an excellent coach, and their parent's support and cooperation, can climb to the top of the mountain. But it is difficult for other children who have missed the opportunity to climb to the top early to have the motivation to reach the top because the level difference has become too wide by the time they begin playing a sport at a later age. In junior high school sports competitions, the difference in performance level is extremely wide between teams consisting of players who have already played for several years in elementary school and teams consisting of beginners. So,

when I see a match between two such teams, it is not at all competitive. If the beginner team players see the overwhelming ability difference between them and their same grade players, do they think, “will we win next time”? I think those people who can no longer aim for the top level are flowing to the side. In other words, they stop aiming at that level, and think it would be better to play sport happily as a hobby. As a result, sport is divided into those aiming at the top sports level and those who play sport recreationally. This is being called the polarization phenomenon of advance and popularization. This phenomenon is also evident at Fukushima University where I work. There are two competitive volleyball teams aiming at the top level (the men’s team and women’s team respectively), but the number of members is approximately 12 or so. On the other hand, there are three or four volleyball clubs in Fukushima University, each of which has 30 or 40 members, that enjoy recreational volleyball with a mix of men and women once or twice a week. In the recreational club, there are some highly skilled volleyball players whom I invited to join our competitive team through our captain, but I could not recruit anyone at all. Maybe they practiced strenuously and aimed at the top level when they were at high school but when they entered university, they no longer thought that they were going to aim at a higher level of volleyball at the expense of their time, money, and energy. Because there are many more teams ranked high in universities throughout the country, they know that it is mostly impossible for them to reach the Japanese elite level even if they pour their energy exclusively into volleyball. If that is correct, it is a natural idea that it is better to enjoy a wide range of activities, for instance, travel, study, enjoying volleyball, a part-time job, and more. In contrast, students who work strenuously at a higher level of volleyball may become elite after they enter university.

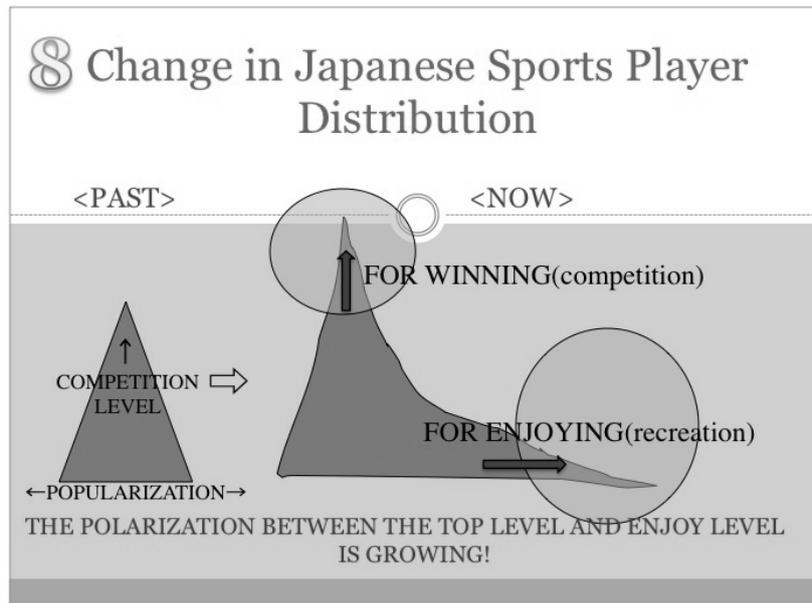


Figure 1

7.Problem of Japanese Coaching

Then, what is the problem with Japanese sports coaching for children? It is said that one of the problems in Japan is teaching too much. Here, I will describe my own episode of what I call “telling too much syndrome.” I went skating with my daughter who is an elementary school child the other day. I took a video of her skating and was shocked to go home and see the video that I had recorded. With the picture of my daughter skating in a circle, my voice was calling out the frequent instructions “stay on the outer edge,” “slide with one leg.” I have no intention of bringing my daughter up as a pro skater. Nevertheless, I simply wanted to tell her the basic skating skills and more, while she was just enjoying skating. It reminded me of when we went skiing

and I kept advising my daughter to “turn to the right and left and keep the weight outside of your turn” while she was enjoying a straight descent. When we go to the pool, I advise, “don’t raise your face while taking a breath!” and when she climbs a tree, I say, “put your right foot on that branch next!” I always regret it after I have said these things; but is it just me? When a child enters a competitive club, the coach wants to teach basic skills immediately through repeated basic practice rather than free play. The coach makes the children practice only those skills that are used in the game in order to win the immediate game. In other words, long-term instruction is not considered. The coach makes the children adopt detailed techniques, personal techniques, and fixed patterns. Children tend not to engage in various sports or various activities, but to play one sport professionally.

8.Sports Rotation System

I have an idea with regard to this phenomenon, which I call the “sports rotation system.” When I was a child, I played baseball under a system of “positional rotation.” This baseball system is one in which the player defends each defense position in turn. The player is a catcher, a pitcher, a first baseman, defense 1, defense 2, and so on. In this system, there are two batters and two bases, first base and home base. When the batter strikes the ball, he goes to first base, and then returns to home base. A batter continues to be batter until he is put out. When a batter is put out, the batter becomes the last position of defense, defense 1 becomes first baseman, first baseman becomes pitcher, pitcher becomes catcher, and catcher becomes batter. This is quite different from systems that are divided into two teams. I think children can enjoy

baseball equally. When they play baseball in the two teams system ordinarily, they may think, “Who will be the pitcher?” “I won’t be catcher!” “The ball isn’t flying at all even if I’m fielding.” Thus, the enjoyment of the defense cannot be tasted equally. Their turn does not come even if they are playing offence, and they are often back in the field again. Everyone except the batter sits down on a bench, and the offence waits for the batting order. This is wasteful. Everyone can always enjoy baseball equally in this rotation system, and there is no person who is not playing. I think the volleyball rotation system is wonderful so that everyone was originally able to enjoy both spiking and receiving. But you know, volleyball has evolved into a specialized position system, with setter, libero, or middle blocker, etc. I think it is better for most players to enjoy various positions in sports except for those at the top level. I want children to enjoy various sports while rotating.

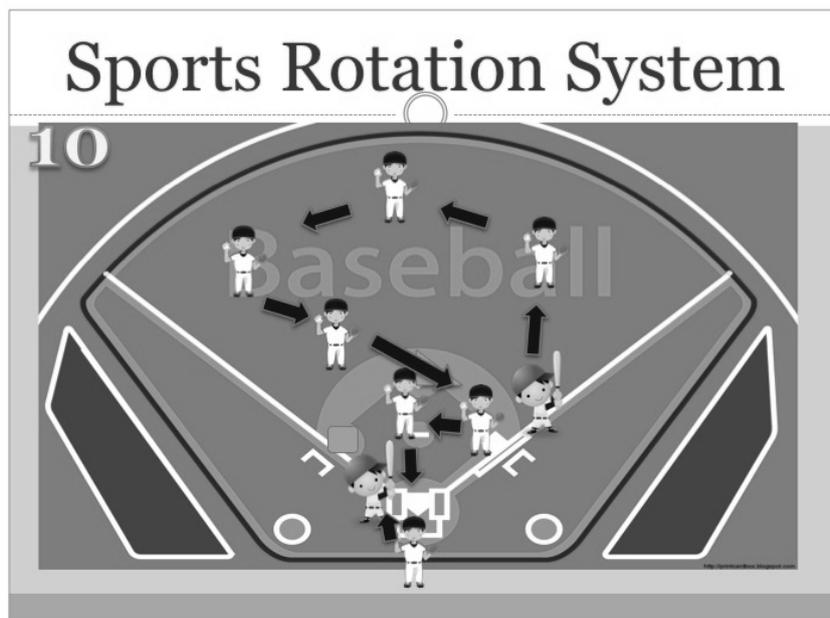


Figure 2

9. Problem of Japanese Coaching

Players are ordered and directed by a coach, and every time they fail, they are scolded. A player who has technique, but lacks autonomy and creativity, is complete. This is similar to a robot that moves only when given directions. Nevertheless, it is possible to win at junior level. But when children reach senior level, it is difficult to win easily any more. It is not possible to reach the top global level only with a little failsafe play and manual play. By playing one sport, maintaining the same position, and practicing the same pattern of play repeatedly, the scope of a player's movement and way of thinking gradually becomes narrow. When they can no longer continue the sport, they cannot play other sports at all. Among our sports course students, there are many students who can play only soccer or only basketball. This phenomenon is increasing. Previously, students who played a ball sport were also almost as good at other ball sports. This was because previously, students had had a great deal of experience of ball play in their childhood before they began playing sports. The number of today's young people who have only experienced a specific sport is increasing.

10. Necessary for Coaching: Cultivating Player's Independence

Now, based on these current conditions, I think of some necessary points for coaching (in Japan). The first point is that coaches should enhance the independence of the players. As a coach gives many directions to a player, a

player cannot act when not being directed. As a coach scolds a player frequently, a player cannot play when he is not scolded by a coach. That is like a drug. When I coached the Fukushima University volleyball club about 20 years ago, the team was at approximately the 10th level in the north-eastern region of Japan. In the beginning, I taught the players individually, in methods of exercise, volleyball skills, formations, and so on, by hitting the ball, demonstrating the spike, etc. I participated in practice every day. At that time, I thought it was necessary to do so in order to make the team strong. I did not know whether this was the outcome, but the team was becoming strong. The team was becoming strong as my work in the university increased, and the opportunity to teach directly was decreasing. I decided to consult with the team captain about the contents and method of practice. I decided only to engage in large directionality and entrusted the captain with the details of practice content and amount. Although I could not easily go to the gymnasium to watch practice, the team was becoming strong and our team finally won the championship at the north-east block league match in autumn this year! Now, I sometimes go to the gymnasium and watch the state of practice as a coach. I sometimes advise, but I do not make players practice directly or hit the ball as I did in the past. The amount of advice I give when they practice has also decreased compared with in the past. This is because the players advise each other and practice by themselves. You could say that the strength of the team and number of remarks given by the coach are in a relation of inverse proportion. In other words, because I could no longer easily go to the gymnasium, our team became strong. As a result of thinking by themselves, mainly led by the captain, and having devised their practice as a team, I think that they became strong. If they engage in practice only when directed by a

coach, even when they lose a game, it is not their responsibility. But if they practice what they have considered by themselves, when they lose, they think that the method of practice was useless and then consider seriously what is necessary to win. Thus, they have a sense of responsibility and independence. I think it is very important to create such an environment when coaching.

11.Necessary for Coaching: Player first, Team Plan Next

Secondly, it is necessary to adapt coaching based on individual players. A coach has a role of bringing up a player as well as bringing up a team, in the case of team sports in particular. In this case, when the coach thinks of the team first, he tends to think how to apply the player to the team while team making and coaching. At that time, the coach would like to create an ideal team, but no appropriate player exists for such a team. I would grieve for the lack of players and that the present players were not adequate in terms of physique, physical strength, or skill. I think that a coach should observe the players' characteristics objectively, and think how to combine the special qualities of these players. I noticed recently that I had made the same change in the order when I cook.

12.Change of Cooking Process

Previously, when I made a dish, first I decided what dish I wanted to make with a recipe book and then I prepared the necessary ingredients for it. But I had to buy the necessary ingredients especially for the dish, and I could

not use the remaining ingredients effectively, meaning that it was wasteful. However, recently, my cooking order has been to select the ingredients first and then decide on the dish; that is, the cooking order is reversed because hundreds of recipes can be found immediately when I type the ingredients into an internet browser search window. For example, I input the names of ingredient that I now have, in combinations such as “tomato, chicken,” “radish, ground meat,” etc. Next, I choose the dish I want to make by adding a key word such as “easy” from the many dishes that have appeared on the computer or smartphone screen. By doing it this way, even if I do not have knowledge of a dish, it can be made easily and I do not waste the ingredients in my refrigerator. This would be quite a convenient world. This reverse idea of “from ingredients to dish” can also be utilized for sports team making. By making a team where the team plan comes first and the players are applied to

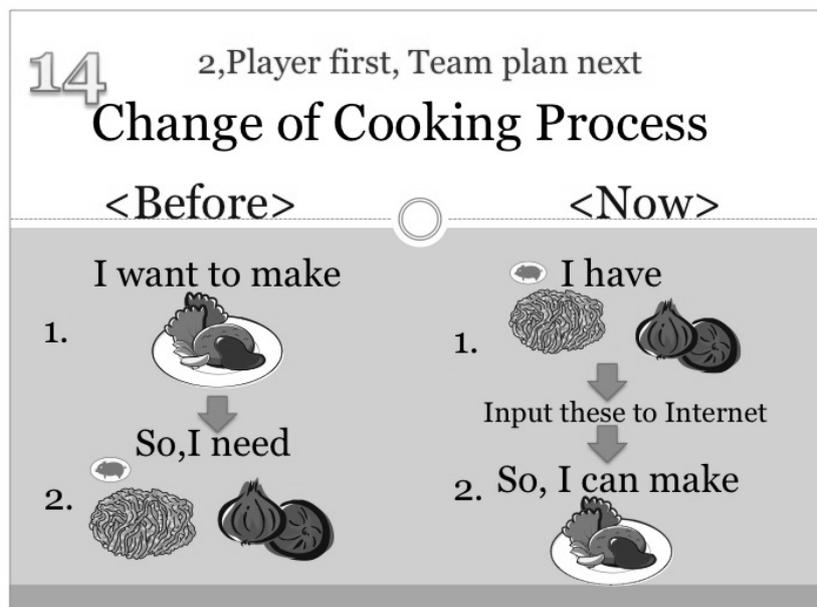


Figure 3

that plan, it seems great, but by this procedure, one might think, “There isn’t a player who can play the role of this position,” or “I’d like to make a large team, but there isn’t a big person.” Thus, I would often grieve for the lack of a player. Conversely, however, when I consider that we have a player of such features now and what kind of team can be made, team making using the materials (players) fully becomes possible.

13.Examples of Japanese Volleyball Team and Rugby Team

Mr. Manabe, who is the coach of the Japanese female volleyball team, had the same idea as this. The Japanese female volleyball team did not have enough good middle blockers, but they had a lot of good wing spikers with high offensive power and some of those wing spikers were left over. Mr. Manabe suffered from this unbalance. The starting members in a volleyball team consist of two middle blockers, three wing spikers, and one setter (and a libero + 1 person). However, this is a theory and generally, a team is made by applying players to this composition. But Mr. Manabe reduced the number of middle blockers to just one person and increased the number of strong wing spikers to four in order to make the most of the strength of the Japanese players available at that time. This is probably a first step in team making at the global top level. As a result, this team won the third prize in the world competition. This was an example in which the coach grasped the features of the players first, and thought what kind of team could be made from those players. Another example is the current Japanese rugby team. This year, the Japanese rugby team won a dramatic reverse victory from South Africa, which

is one of the strongest teams in the world, and this was newsworthy. The head coach Eddie Jones built the team with the slogan “Japan way.” He thought that the features of the Japanese should be utilized to make up for the Japanese inferiority in terms of physique, in order to win on a global level. He then continued with the difficult training that can create the necessary agility and stamina to keep running and, in this way, a strong team was made. This is a good example of considering the players’ features first. I think the Japanese team could not have won while he thought it was impossible to win because the Japanese physique was small.

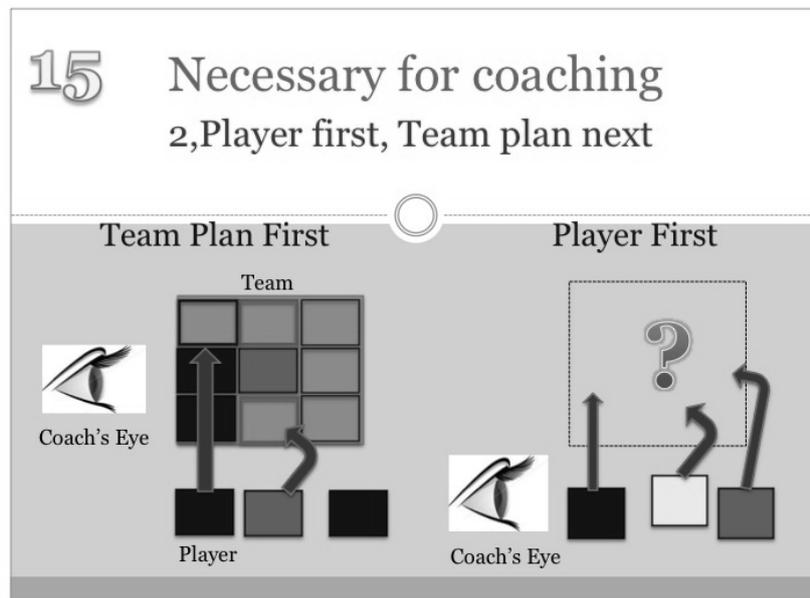


Figure 4

14.Necessary for Coaching: Improve Player from Outside

The third point is to help to improve players and teams from the outside. Because a player cannot easily improve his skill by himself, it is important for a coach to promote correction objectively from a technical point of view. Courage is necessary for a player to change the way he has been built and to which he feels attached. This is like proofreading and correcting sentences by oneself. The difficulty of the puzzle is like a Rubik's Cube and 15 puzzles that we cannot complete until we have broken the part that we have already finished. Because consciousness functions as "It's hard to break what I have created strenuously," when I had completed three of the six sides of a Rubik's Cube, I was afraid to break the beautiful three sides and left it as it was for a while. In other words, we need strong will and resolution because it takes quite a large amount of stress to break the completed part by oneself, and thus to accomplish. In writing sentences, when we read the sentences written by ourselves once more, we may find that this sentence should be corrected. But it is difficult for us to abandon the sentences, so we tend to think the sentences can be utilized somehow. The sentences will often have a result that was not necessary after all, but this judgment cannot be made easily by itself. The way to solve this problem is easy. It is to have other people break the sentences. When I ask other people to check my sentences, they can check the sentences from a very objective viewpoint because other people cannot know my emotional attachment or effort. Moreover, sentences have no relation to their own perfection, so it must be better for them to be corrected by other people.

Similarly, in sport, there is a time when we have to break our familiar skill and learn a higher one. It can be said that sports skill improvement is a repeat of the process of scrap and build. But to scrap a skill by oneself requires considerable courage and decision because I must accept that my performance is down at that time. So, objective judgment and guidance from a coach are needed. “You will certainly grow when you correct this skill!” I think the necessity of a coach who holds a firm belief and appeals to a player, and leads to new skill acquisition is very large in sports, which always need you to scrap and build.

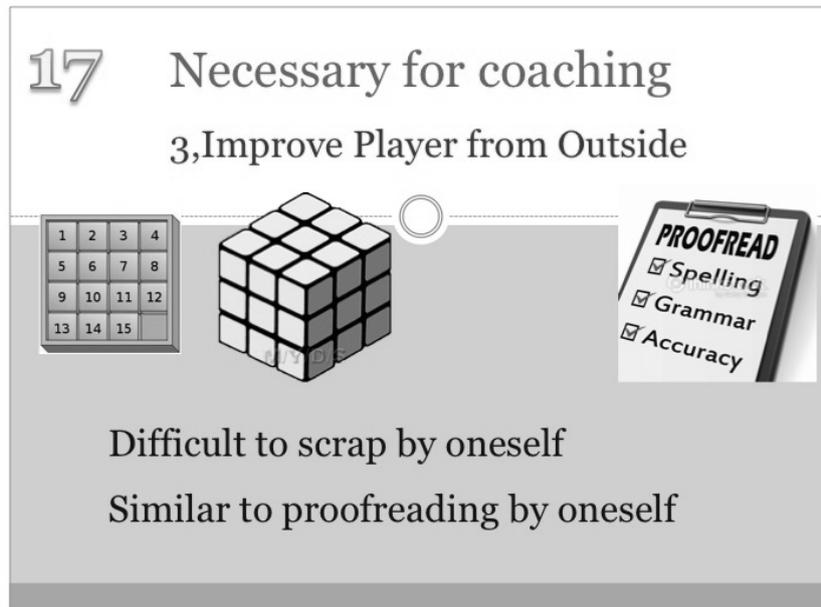


Figure 5

15. Conclusion

Here is the conclusion. I have expressed the thinking required to coach from various points of view.

1. To raise the player's autonomy, or, cultivating player's Independence.
2. To observe the players first, and to conceptualize and build a team from there.
3. To help improve the skill of players from the outside objectively.

Although I think there are many other points required by a coach, these three points are what I have felt recently. Many people describe a coach from various points of view, so of course I will not say that they are absolute. If you understand that these points are one coach's point of view, I will be thankful.