

5 Questions Before Calling an Athlete “Unmotivated”

Before you label the athlete, make sure you’ve diagnosed the problem.

Know?

INSTRUCTION

Can?

SKILL

Access?

ACCOMMODATION

Clear?

EXPECTATION

Choosing?

ACCOUNTABILITY

1 Know What to Do

ASK “What’s your job right now?” If they can’t answer, it’s an instruction problem, not motivation.

4 Given a Clear Next Step

TRY “Win the next rep.” Break the expectation into something they can act on right now.

2 Actually Able to Do It

ASK “Show me what you’re trying to do.” Don’t confuse inability with unwillingness.

5 Choosing Not to Meet It

NOTE Know it, can do it, understand it, and still won’t. That’s when accountability applies.

3 Able to Access the Instruction

ASK “What part is making this difficult?” Changing how you coach can change how they participate.

A SIMPLE COACH DIAGNOSTIC

“This athlete just doesn’t care.”

Stop, then ask: do they know, can they do it, can they access it, is the expectation clear, are they choosing not to. Then decide what they actually need.

WHAT NOT TO SAY

Instead of “You’re not motivated” **TRY** “What’s getting in the way?”

Instead of “You don’t care” **TRY** “What’s making this difficult right now?”

Instead of “Try harder” **TRY** “Here’s what I need from you on this rep.”

“Unmotivated” is a conclusion, not a diagnosis.

Identify the problem before you label the athlete.

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