

PREFERENTIAL SEATING

TRANSLATING A CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATION TO THE FIELD

Preferential seating means placing a student in a location that helps them better access instruction.

For coaches, think preferential positioning.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In the classroom:

A student may be seated where they can:

- Hear the teacher clearly
- See the board
- Avoid distractions
- Stay engaged
- Access instruction more easily

On the field:

The same principle applies.

Where you position an athlete can affect how well they can see, hear, process, and respond to your coaching.

COACH'S QUICK CHECK

Before giving an important instruction, ask:

- Can they see me?
- Can they hear me?
- Can they focus on the information?
- Can they act on it?

If the answer is no... change the position
before changing the athlete.

5 WAYS TO USE PREFERENTIAL POSITIONING

1

Put them where they can see.

During demonstrations, position the athlete where they have a clear view.

Coach translation:

Don't demonstrate with the athlete standing behind three teammates.

Put them where they can see it.

2

Put them where they can hear.

Practice environments can get loud. Whistles. Teammates. Music. Crowds. Multiple coaches talking.

If an athlete struggles to hear verbal instruction, consider positioning them closer to the coach.

Less distance. Less noise. Better access.

3

Reduce unnecessary distractions.

Sometimes the best position isn't the closest position.

An athlete may learn better away from:

- The loudest part of practice
- Heavy foot traffic
- Excessive movement
- Other distractions

Think about what is competing for their attention.

4

Position them for success.

Think about where the athlete is during the instruction, not just where they are during the drill.

Before teaching something new: Can they see me? Can they hear me? Can they focus on what I'm showing them?

If not... move them.

5

It doesn't have to be permanent.

Preferential positioning doesn't mean an athlete has to stand next to the coach all practice. Use it when it helps.

Instruction -> Position for access

Practice -> Let them rep

Game -> Put them where they can perform

The goal is access to instruction, not special treatment.

REMEMBER

Sometimes the problem isn't the instruction.
Sometimes it's where the athlete is receiving it.

ACCOMMODATIONS TO THE FIELD

Every athlete learns differently. Every athlete deserves great coaching.