

Pennant Roadblocks

The word roadblocks came out of left field recently when I met with a head coach and chairman of selectors to discuss how to better plan and prepare for the next season, due to start in five months time here in Melbourne. That in itself shows they are switched on at their home club.

We got talking about the top-side players, especially skips, who object to change even though it is for the overall betterment of the team. Yet without the change, the top side will maintain its current level of pennant competition. These two men want their top side to be in the top pennant competition level.

Sounding familiar to you?

This club is in an enviable situation as it has about 25 players in the mix for the top 16 positions. It became apparent that a handful of the top 25 will not embrace the need to change, yet, expect to be in serious contention for the top 16 team. As we chatted the selector called these people 'roadblock' and instantly I challenged both guys and said why put 'roadblocks' in the way of change. Why have 'roadblocks' in any skip position.

Remember in the majority of clubs, the skips advice is sought after each round of pennant competition. Why heed 'roadblocks.' Replace them with skips keen on the new wave of approach, while still giving credence to the skills of the 'roadblock' players by listing them elsewhere in the fours team. Their influence level diminishes in selection, even though it may not at the bar. So be it.

I had experience of this dilemma last year where a handful of clubs spoke to me about skips and others who refused to toe the club line, yet went on without any club reaction. I reckon at the formal club level- selector, coach- we adhere to 3Rs, reward, redirect and reprimand. And the last of the three is by placing the 'roadblock' players either in a lower side or if their skill level still warrants them being in your top side, not having them in your priority leadership position of skip. That is the reprimand approach in this case.

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And all club members can see they will gain reward for being willing to grasp the change for the collective 'better' of the club. Clubs like that are to be valued.

Glad to be able to report that the club concerned has all sides, read that again, all sides in finals.

Lesson to be learned from them.

Lachlan Tighe, 2018