

# COACHING TIP

From Rex C. Houze

## KEEP SCORE FOR GREATER RESULTS

One day my daughter and I were playing basketball in our driveway with some of the neighborhood boys. Lindsay was nine and hadn't shown much athletic prowess yet. When the boys tired of the game, Lindsay said to me, "I'm not very good, am I dad?" Her shoulders were slumped and her chin was in her chest. I could not bear seeing her feeling bad about herself and her ability.

I said, "Sure you are", threw her the basketball and encouraged her to take more shots. After several misses, she made a basket and I said out loud, "That's one." She was startled, but continued to shoot. When she made another basket, I said, "Two", and continued to count aloud as she made additional baskets. In about 10 minutes, she had made 8 or 9 baskets. Now, her shoulders were back, her chin was up, and she said with a big smile, "I'm pretty good, ain't I dad?"

During the 10 minutes, I did not offer any shooting tips, I just kept score. Lindsay played organized basketball from the fourth grade through high school, was the leading scorer on her high school team, and made the All-District team. What a difference 10 minutes and keeping score made. Listed below are four scorekeeping principles that will help you get greater results personally and in your business when you keep score.

**Keep it simple.** If keeping score requires too many or complicated calculations or takes too much time, people will be reluctant to keep score. Remember the KISS principle --- Keep It Short and Simple.

**Keep it visual.** A common thought is that a picture is worth a thousand words. Likewise a graph can be worth a thousand words or numerous columns of numbers. Visual scorekeeping means displaying the score prominently as well as graphically.

**Keep it objective.** In most sporting events, the score is rarely, if ever, in dispute. The same kind of certainty and objectivity is needed in business scorekeeping. A subjective goal such as improved communication or morale can be quantified by answering the questions, "What will be different when communication is improved?" or "...when morale is improved?" For example, there might be less mistakes, improved quality, improved attendance or improved employee retention.

You can also use the electronic scoreboard concept. If you had an electronic scoreboard at the end of your work area, what would you put on it to know that you are winning?

**Keep it current.** Most things in life are better when they are fresh. The same is true with scorekeeping in business. Week-old, or even day-old, numbers are not as good as "freshly-baked," same-day numbers.

The main purpose of keeping score is to improve performance and results. Make sure you use your scorekeeping system to solve problems, not to find fault. Once problems are identified and defined, use the insight you gain from keeping score to decide what corrective action is needed.

Computers have given business leaders better access and more information to operate their businesses. When you use this information to keep score, you can make remarkable improvements in performance and results.