

The Fine Art of the Great Half-Time Pep Talk

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As a coach, we have all been there. Our team is playing a great game, but it just needs a little bit of motivation at half time to carry the players through the remainder of the match. I remember such a game.

The score was 1-1 and my players were starting to lose their intensity. Fortunately, it was half time and I could assuredly get them motivated to play a great second half.

This was my half-time talk: "Girls I hate to do Knute Rockne half-time talks, but today you are going to get one. When times are rough and things aren't going your way..." I gave it to those 12-year-old girls just like Knute gave it to his Notre Dame football team.

When we broke from half time, I was one proud, eloquent speaker. For what a second half the girls played! We won 3-2 in one of the best games I have ever seen these girls play. Both teams were just magnificent during the second half. It was a shame that one team had to finish second, to see how well both teams had played.

I was so cocky over the weekend. I was already working on the next week's half-time tale when I got to practice on Tuesday. I always start my practice with a review of the last game or the last practice we had. Since we had played Saturday, we were to review the game. I opened the discussion with, "Does anyone have any questions before we critique Saturday's game?" One girl had a question.

"Coach, who is Knute Rockne and what did his friend the Nipper do for a living?" she inquired, truly confused.

My jaw dropped. They didn't even know who Knute Rockne or George Gip were. I asked them, "What motivated you to play so hard the second half of our game on Saturday?" Collectively, the girls said, "The girls from the other team told us our uniforms were ugly."

So much for half-time motivational talks.