

# **The Impact of Chaos, Complexity, and Luck on Coaching Success**

By

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## **Abstract**

*Many coaches trust that competitive success can be assured through a combination of hard work and the employment of Newtonian-based models of instruction and training. But in the real world working harder does not guarantee success. Further, the use of the best training and coaching techniques cannot assure victory. Chaos theory and complexity science dictate that as complex social systems, sports teams are prone to the impact of chaotic factors making success in specific competitive events beyond the direct control of the coach. Moral luck, simple luck, and various environmental factors also impact a coach's probability of achieving competitive success. Effective coaches do utilize scientifically based theories and models of instruction to enhance the probability of achieving competitive success but they cannot control competitive outcomes. Administrators who understand the impact of chaos and luck may avoid unfairly terminating the employment of coaches who experience losses due to no fault of their own. Coaches who understand and appreciate the impact of chaos, complexity and luck upon the probability of achieving competitive success can experience higher levels of satisfaction gained from coaching activity, reduce the likelihood of experiencing burnout, and increase the length of their coaching careers.*

**Keywords:** *Chaos, Complexity, Coaching, Winning, Luck*