

## **Leadership Lessons From Attila The Hun**

In around 440AD, Attila, king of the Huns and “Scourge of Gods”, created a united conglomeration of Mongolian tribes around a common purpose – the plunder and pillage of the eastern Roman Empire. If you need to bond your team to beat a well-organised and resourced opponent, who better than Attila to teach us a few things?

### **The coach as leader**

Above all else, like Attila you’ve got to want to be in charge of your team and players. Those who want to lead must have a desire to gain personal recognition, and then be prepared to work hard for success.

You should not be threatened by “capable contemporaries or subordinates”. To be a successful leader, you will have to select carefully your most capable “captains”. They will then help you achieve more than you could if you were acting alone.

### **What can you do?**

- Never apologise for the session or drill you are going to do.
- Never admit that you are nervous, even if you are feeling it.
- Let other opinions have a chance to be heard, but have the final say.
- If you want to be in charge – be the best prepared coach you can be.

### **Team morale and discipline**

Successful leaders, like Attila, realise that either very harsh or very lax discipline will undo team morale. Either scenario can also lead to dissension and dissatisfaction, and create an environment few can enjoy.

### **What can you do?**

- You should be consistent in all areas of your coaching. This helps preserve morale. Try to praise everyone at some time, without being too gushing. For example, don’t say “that was fantastic guys”, when your team is under-performing, whether during a game or a training session.
- Shouting and over criticism will rarely improve morale or discipline.
- But, do not let misdemeanours by players go unnoticed.

By developing a team focussed around one leader, with many “captains” to follow your lead (as well as offer you advice and insight), you can create an outfit that’s motivated, disciplined, and ready to play rugby together.