



NEWS RELEASE

June 12, 2014

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Coach brings experience and teaching skills in archery to warriors

West Point, New York — The best coaches bring unique skills in teaching and motivating to their team.

John Fuller, head coach of the archery team at the 2014 U.S. Army Warrior Trials, is a retired Marine 1st Sergeant and a senior citizen.

His coaching approach for wounded, ill and injured warriors has to be different than for people who have not been injured. The skill he brings is a focus on the problems warriors face and then designing a way to allow the warriors to be competitive.

The trials are being held at the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York, from June 15 - 19.

Fuller has been coaching archery for about 10 years and an archer since about 1950.

He first got into coaching when he was asked to volunteer to coach the archery team at Camp Lejune.

Archery is a sport of precision. A location on a target the size of a quarter at 20 meters is not that difficult for a top notch archer to hit. It's hitting dead center on the quarter that is the trick.

The very best archers can hold the bow rock steady, sight clearly, and release the draw string smoothly. The result can be a dead center hit.

According to Fuller, the slightest movement in the hand, a breath, or a string release that is not perfectly steady could move the arrow strike by as little as an inch or as much as a foot. Warriors still recovering from injuries may have trouble, say, with a smooth release or sighting through the finder. The result might be missing dead center by only a few inches and that might be enough to lose a completion.

That's where Coach Fuller's specialty comes in. Each situation for the warriors is different. Fuller works with each athlete to change aim and release, and he has even helped athlete with only one arm develop techniques to be competitive.

Coach Fuller talked about archers "getting in the zone". That's the total focus you need on the target and to block out any distractions. Getting in the zone is a process with each shot. "You can only stay in the zone so long before you'll lose focus," he says.

Since a typical release of any arrow could take about 30 seconds, the archer should move in and out of the zone, making each shot a separate event for the archer.

Fuller used the example of the shortstop in baseball. In between pitches, the shortstop can fiddle with his glove or smooth the infield dirt. He doesn't have pay close attention. As soon as the pitcher is ready to release the pitch, the shortstop then comes into total focus and is prepared to field the ball.



He not only trains archers, he also trained all of the assistant coaches. He doesn't teach them archery, rather he teaches his way of coaching. The team has five assistant coaches and all of them have been with him for at least three years.

Fuller encourages his students to have reasonable goals. A gold medal might seem a worthy goal, but it might not be a reasonable goal. A reasonable goal, he says, "is to make every shot as perfect as possible."

"If you do that," he says, "winning will take care of itself."

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Warrior Transition Command (WTC) is a major subordinate command under the U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM). WTC's mission is to develop, coordinate and integrate the Army's Warrior Care and Transition Program (WCTP) for wounded, ill and injured soldiers, veterans and their families. For more information on WTC, visit the new WTC website, www.WTC.army.mil, follow on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/armyWTC> or join Facebook at <http://facebook.com/armyWTC>.

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