

WELCOME TO INCOURAGE

Playbook for
Coaches and
Athletic Directors



WE ARE INCOURAGE

We are a leadership team of experienced high school athletic directors, coaches, educators, and sports psychologists working under the creative direction of an award-winning sports and business media leader.

We offer strategies to build a better culture in youth sports and keep kids from dropping out of organized athletics.

We create engaging videos, programs and playbooks to help young athletes and adults improve the culture of youth sports

We do this to keep young athletes in the game. Too often they lose the love of the game because of overwhelming negative forces. Bullying, parental pressures, negative coaching techniques - they all take the fun out of the sport.

With this Playbook you'll learn how to train your coaches to be goal and success based educators.

INCOURAGE PLAYBOOK

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CHARACTER THAT LASTS A LIFETIME

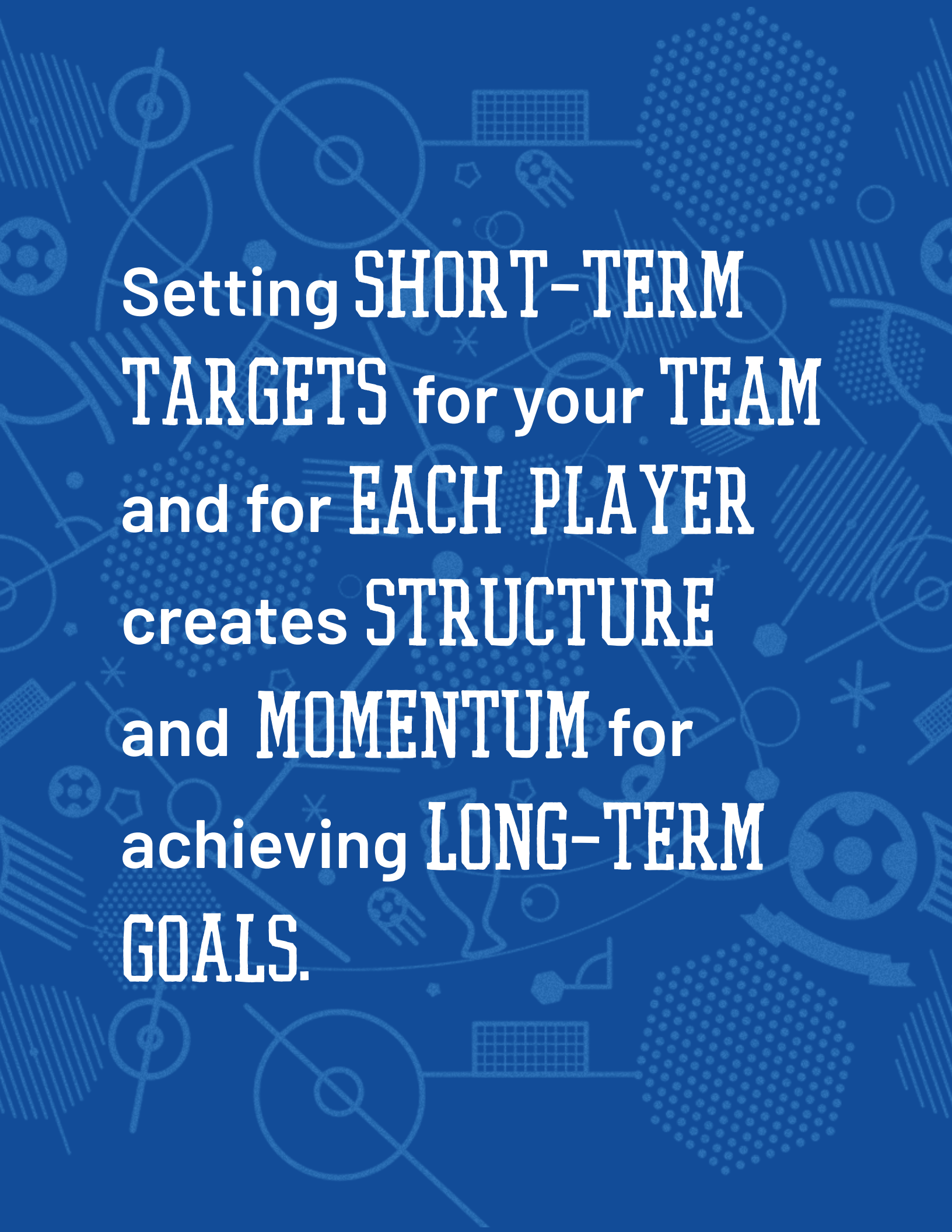
Coaches and Athletic
Directors as Goal and
Success Based
Educators

SHORT-TERM TARGETS AND LONG-TERM GOALS

Review and Video Supplement



[Watch the Video »](#)

The background is a solid blue color with a pattern of white geometric shapes and soccer-related icons. These include circles, lines, and stylized soccer balls. Faintly visible in the background is a soccer field with a goal and a player.

Setting **SHORT-TERM**
TARGETS for your **TEAM**
and for **EACH PLAYER**
creates **STRUCTURE**
and **MOMENTUM** for
achieving **LONG-TERM**
GOALS.

PART 1: BECOMING A GREAT COACH AND TEACHER

Great coaches are almost always great teachers.

You aren't just forging character from competition: the values your athletes learn under your watch will remain with them for a lifetime.

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EFFECTIVE COACHING TECHNIQUES

MENTOR

Guide young athletes on how they can transfer skills to other aspects of their lives beyond sports.

DEMONSTRATE

Show what you want them to know. Some of the best aspects of learning come from visual presentations.

TEACH

Explain how to practice, manage their time, work with their teammates, and handle adversity.

ONE-ON-ONE

Undivided attention allows for a transfer of knowledge with a personal touch.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Actions speak louder than words.

MOTIVATE

Inspire and challenge students daily. Show them what success looks like and how to go after it.

HELPING PLAYERS LEARN

Establish clear and measurable learning objectives that promote a fertile environment for growth. You can achieve this through a wide variety of strategies, techniques, and tools that establish a positive exchange of knowledge between player and coach.

CONNECT THE DOTS

Drills connect to the scrimmage, which connects to the game.

ASK DON'T TELL

Welcome players to think for themselves, and then help them learn from the outcome.

UNDERSTAND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Getting the message and culture right on the team is essential to a successful season.

LEARNING CURVES AND STYLES

Learning curves are different for all children.

You can't treat all of your athletes the same, but they must be treated fairly at all times. Some athletes might need more attention than others. Sometimes, you might use different techniques and strategies for each athlete. Everyone responds differently to motivation techniques and a coach needs to find the right balance for every athlete.



HOW KIDS LEARN: INFORMATION PROCESSING

Besides patience, coaches need to closely understand their players and how certain matters could affect how they process information.

VISUAL

Many young athletes are visual learners and rely on detailed instructions that are repeated when accomplishing tasks. Technology can be an asset.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

ADHD, dyslexia, anxiety, these issues and more affect how athletes learn and retain information.

STRUGGLE WITH TRANSITION

It might be difficult to get everyone back on track when there are extended periods of idle time at practice.

TIP: Sometimes, it also helps if a practice schedule is clearly mapped out ahead of time and posted in the locker room for everyone to see. This might eliminate some anxiety, as well as allow athletes to properly prepare for practice.

COACH, TEACHER, PSYCHOLOGIST

Sometimes, a coach needs to be a psychologist so that they can truly understand how to manage all of the different personalities and learning styles of their athletes.

Coaches need to be positive, enthusiastic, and constantly provide teachable moments which tie directly back to overall learning outcomes.



PART 2: ORGANIZING TO IMPROVE PLAYER AND TEAM PERFORMANCE

Setting individual, short-term targets focuses players on challenging themselves.

By competing with themselves rather than their teammates, players are less likely to do things that undermine the success of their team.

Watch the Video »



SHORT-TERM TARGETS

Setting short-term targets for your team and players creates structure and momentum for achieving long term goals.

Whether it's for individual players or for the team, short-term targets should be drawn from three categories:

1. PHYSICAL TRAINING AND CONDITIONING
2. TACTICS AND STRATEGY
3. ATTITUDE AND MIND



LONG-TERM GOALS

These short-term targets are the small steps your players will take to accomplish their long-term goals.

Working on short-term targets will help move you toward your long-term goals.

Learning to set long-term goals is the best tool to help you get where you want to go — both in your game and in your life.



SMART GOAL MODEL

SPECIFIC not vague

MEASURABLE use numbers to see achievement

ATTAINABLE to reach the goal make sure the target can be broken down into steps

REALISTIC yet challenging for you or your team

TIMED with a clear duration and deadline

SMART GOAL EXAMPLE

WRITING A SMART GOAL : EXAMPLES

- Make more than 90% of every 10 free throws taken at every practice.
- Lower my time for running 800 meters by 16 seconds by the end of the track season, by lowering my time 2 seconds every two weeks for the next eight weeks.



SMART GOAL WORKSHEET

Name: _____

Date: _____

Write down one SMART goal for this season:

Explain how this goal fulfills the SMART model:

Specific : _____

Measurable : _____

Attainable : _____

Realistic : _____

Timed : _____

PART 3: BENEFITS OF PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEASON

Build long-term success by answering these questions:

- What do you want your team to achieve by mid-season?
- What do you want them to achieve by the end of the season?

Watch the Video »



GOAL PLANNING FOR YOUR SEASON

Your step-by-step guide to setting your goals for the season:

BREAK YOUR SEASON DOWN INTO TWO HALVES

Determine what you want your team to achieve by mid-season. Then determine what you want to achieve by the end of the season.

CONSIDER DIVIDING EACH HALF OF THE SEASON INTO FOUR BLOCKS

Set targets for each block. This will make each set of targets seem more attainable. The individual blocks will become the foundation for the next block until your season's long term goals are within reach.

BENEFITS OF SHORT-TERM TARGETS, LONG-TERM GOALS

By using these targets and goals, you will help youth athletes:

- Cultivate their attitudes
- Feel respect for each other
- Benefit from the season emotionally
- Develop the mindset of a fine competitor



HOW TO USE SHORT-TERM TARGETS, LONG-TERM GOALS WITH YOUR TEAM

- Show the video at a meeting or share via text, email or social media. [Get the video here.](#)
- Introduce Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timed strategies in setting short and long-term goals.
- Have each team member fill out the SMART Goal Worksheet.
- Review each athlete's goal for SMART criteria.
- Establish targets by dividing the athletic season into blocks.
- Block out your targets using the Planning for Your Season approach.
- Utilize multiple teaching techniques to address different learning styles.
- Evaluate learning and skill development through attention to detail.
- Remember, a great coach is foremost a great teacher.

CREATING A SUCCESS MINDSET

Review and Video Supplement



Watch the Video »

LIVE BY A SUCCESS MINDSET

Players with great attitude and strong work ethic make for a much better chance for a successful season.

A success mindset empowers your athletes to love their sport and their progress.

By coaching with a success mindset, you can develop more of these valuable players.



PART 1: DEVELOP A WORK ETHIC, COMMITMENT, AND TRUST

Motivate your team so that everyone looks forward to practices and games.

Assess and set clear short-term targets and long-term goals for each player, and for the team as a whole.

Good coaches make sure that everyone learns to work hard to develop a success mindset - not just early maturing kids with natural talent.

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“

The **FUTURE** of any society depends upon the **CHARACTER** and **COMPETENCE** of its young...Young people need **GUIDANCE** to provide them with **DIRECTION** and a sense of **PURPOSE**. They need to **EXPERIENCE** activities that are **CHALLENGING**, **INSPIRING**, and **EDUCATIVE**.

”

William Damon
Stanford Center on Adolescence

COACH SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. What motivates you to be a coach?

2. Who encouraged you?

3. What did they do?

4. Which coach influenced you the most?

5. What was it about them that impressed you?

6. How is your style similar to that coach?

7. How is your style different than that coach?

8. How do you want the players on your teams to remember you?

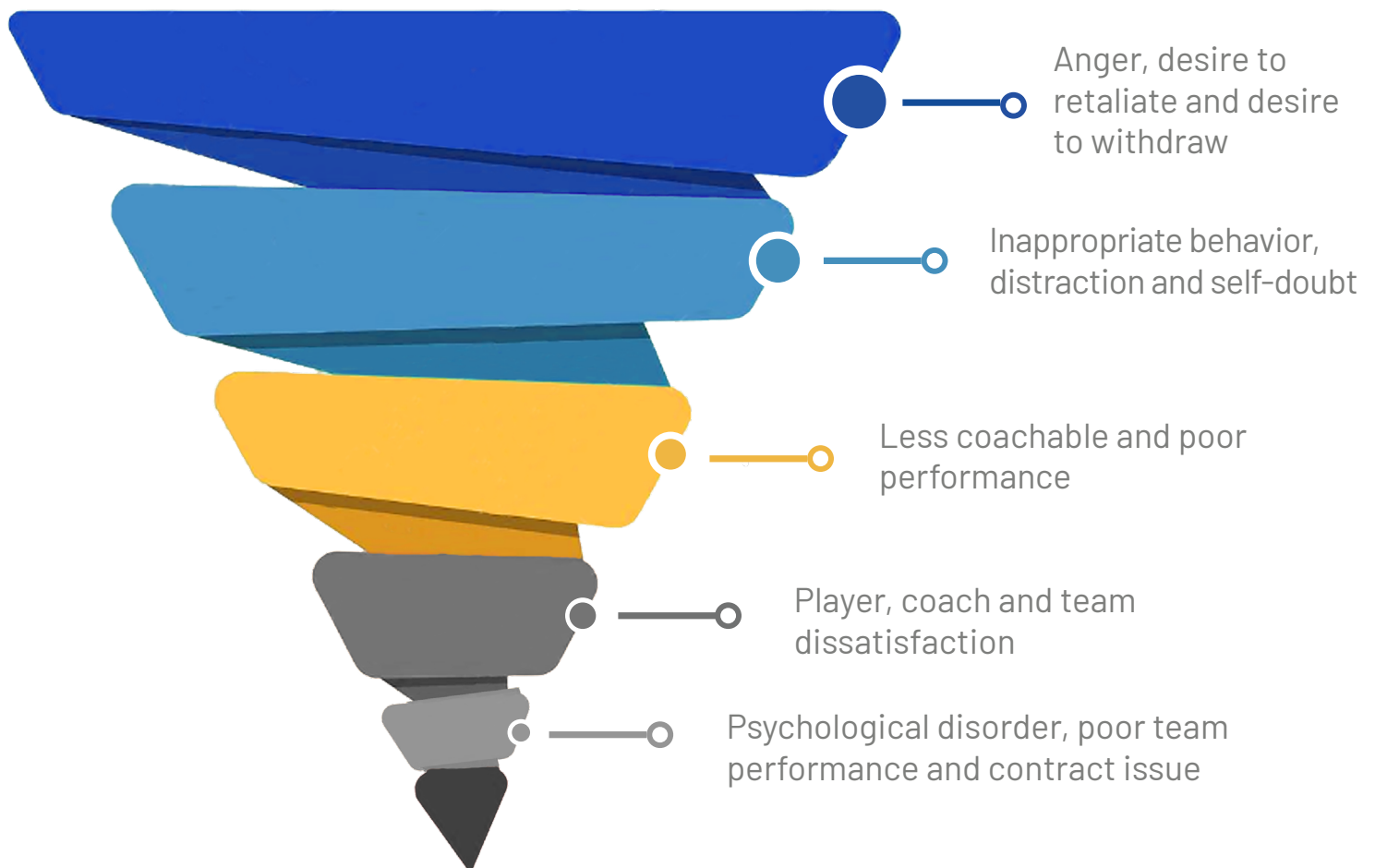
10 DO'S FOR COACHES

1. Mention good play without over-praising.
2. Pick out a specific target behavior and give direct instructions, such as "run left."
3. Set short-term targets and long-term goals.
4. Understand that players grow and change – you can make the difference, positively or negatively, in how they develop.
5. Build trust.
6. Have a plan for the team, for each player, for the support staff – think ahead.
7. Acknowledge good teamwork and good sportsmanship.
8. Build team spirit – create buddy programs (strong players teamed with weaker players), little treats, team chants, etc.
9. Leverage parents' passion effectively for your team goals.
10. Integrate new players and their parents.

10 DON'TS FOR COACHES

1. Don't criticize character – don't use words like lazy, stupid, idiot, blind, deaf, etc.
2. Don't cut down one player to build up another – this builds distrust.
3. Don't build excessive fear in your players – you want respect, not fear.
4. Don't have favorites – look for and build strengths in all your players.
5. Don't build doubt without a plan to build competence and skill.
6. Don't just let the coaching plan be whatever comes to mind— plan ahead and plan carefully.
7. Don't assume that skills are easy to learn – everyone learns at their own pace.
8. Don't tell your troubles to your players or their parents unless you expect them to take some specific action. If you are unhappy about a specific situation, deal with the appropriate hierarchy.
9. Don't squander respect – it's almost impossible to retrieve.
10. Don't allow a culture of disrespect to flourish.

REPETITIVE DISRESPECT LEADS TO:



PART 2: SETTING AND MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

Set expectations at the beginning of the season.

Write, distribute and enforce team rules, including logistics and acceptable behavior for players and parents.

Make exceptions at your own risk!

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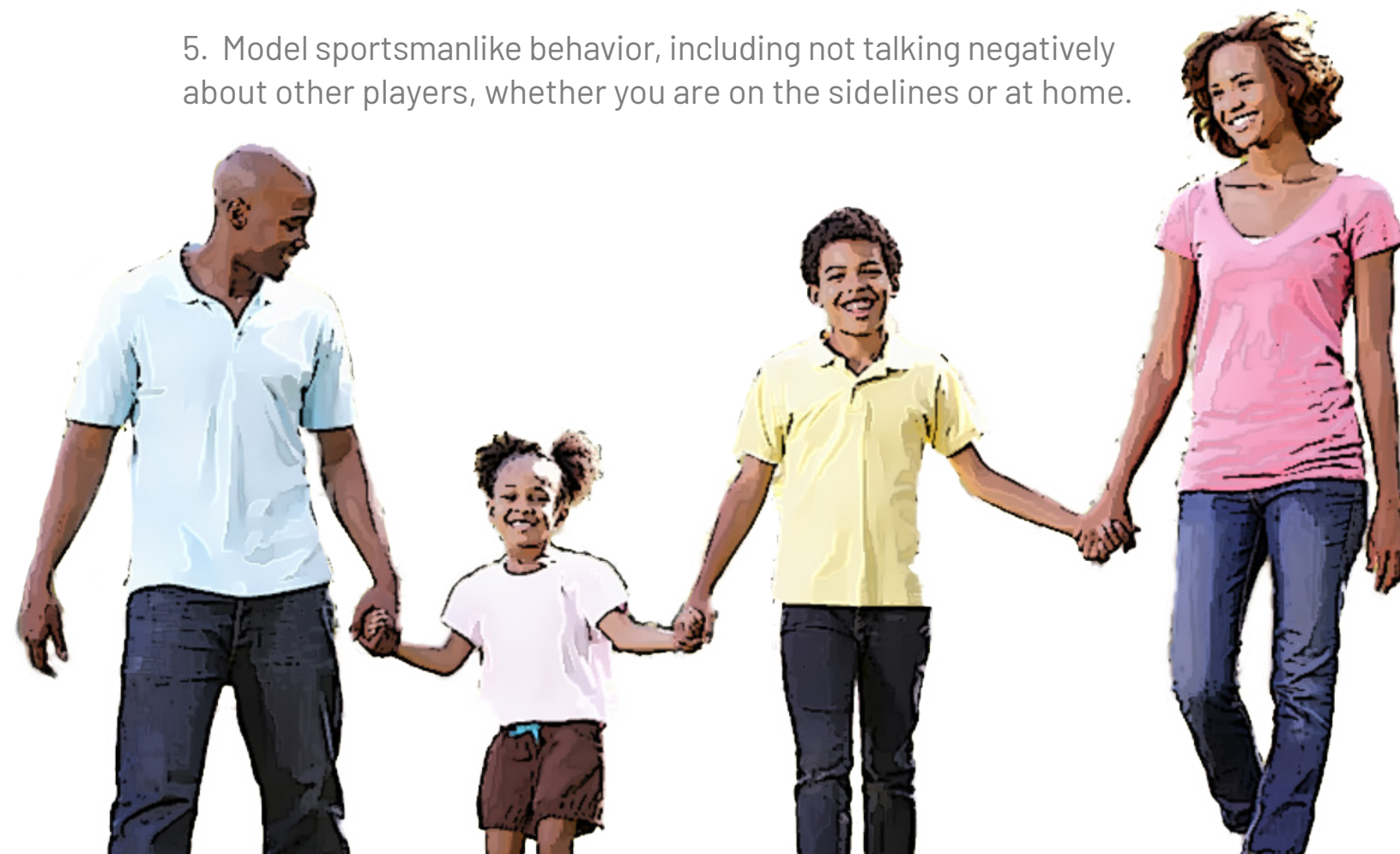
PARTNERING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Invite parents to be active participants in the culture you want to build.
- Go the extra mile to establish communication guidelines.
 - Integrating information on temperament style, physical growth, cognitive development helps with commitment, confidence, and competitiveness.
 - Well trained coaches make a huge difference for players and parents.
 - When adults work as a team with youth, society wins.
- Give them direct actions they can take to reinforce your expectations.



EXPECTATION EXAMPLES

1. Support your child's efforts. Their success depends on it.
2. Work together with coaches to create and reinforce a positive and mutually supportive environment.
3. Treat all coaching staff with kindness, courtesy and respect. Follow the established parent/coach communication plan when issues arise.
4. Get your child to practices and games prepared and on time. Notify the coach in advance of any scheduling conflicts.
5. Model sportsmanlike behavior, including not talking negatively about other players, whether you are on the sidelines or at home.



MEET THE PARENTS: PRE-SEASON MEETING AGENDA

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Share your enthusiasm for the season ahead.

COACHING PHILOSOPHY AND TEAM VALUES

Ask for parents' support in building a culture that reinforces these principles.

GOALS AND HOPES FOR THE SEASON

Ask for parents' support in building a culture that honors these values.

LOGISTICS – HANDOUTS AND HANDBOOKS

- Practice and game schedules
- Team phone and email list
- Understanding equipment needs
- Policy on playing time and missing practice
- When and how they can contact you (at work during the day, only in the evening; cell phone, email, etc.)
- Chain of communication - who to contact for conflict resolution

ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS

Ask for support and you'll have engaged parents.

PART 3: COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATING YOUR ATHLETES

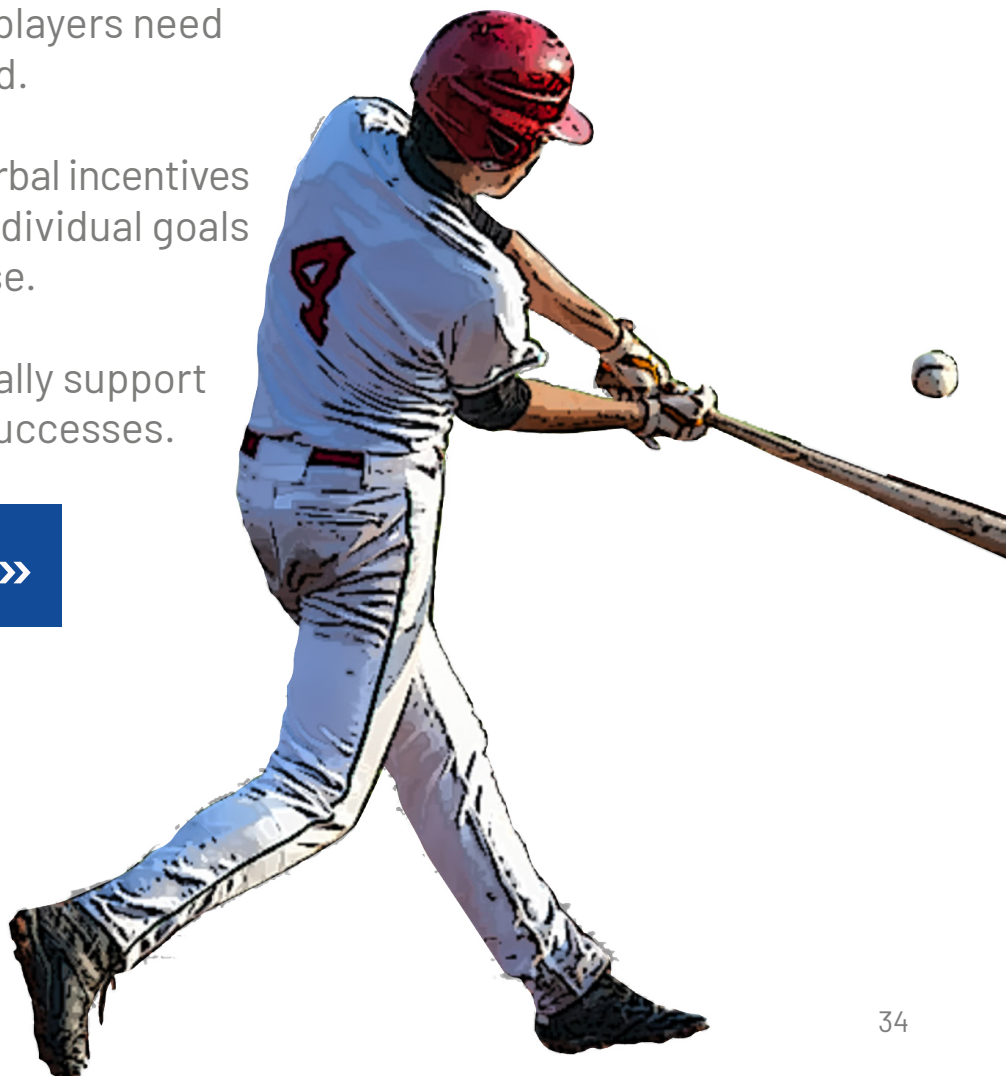
Keep practices moving, challenging, and fun.

Learn to love mistakes: they show and tell you what your players need to achieve and succeed.

Give players positive verbal incentives to work on team and individual goals but avoid general praise.

Push and enthusiastically support and point to specific successes.

Watch the Video »



10 TRUTHS ABOUT TEAMS

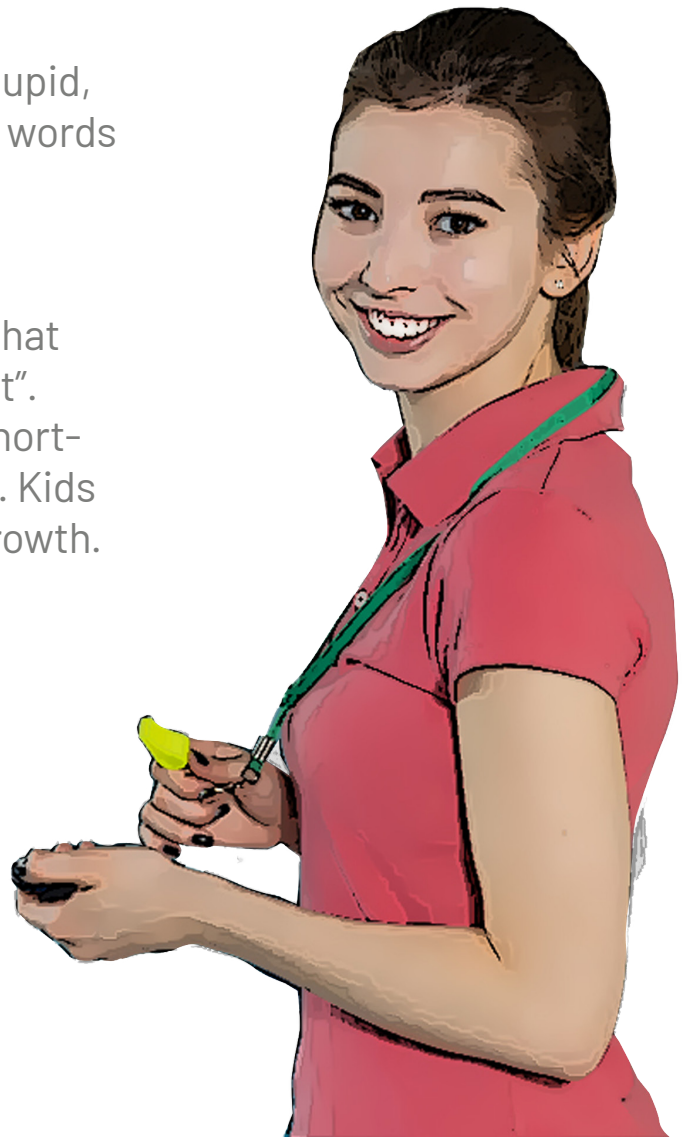
1. Change is constant — you must be flexible and anticipate your competition. The very best performers tend to be change-friendly.
2. Conflicts are inevitable and healthy; resolve them in a win/win fashion.
3. Effective/clear communication is vital.
4. Acknowledgment instead of criticism builds teams.
5. Focus on goals rather than problems.
6. Teams that thrive have a clear vision and mission.
7. Good goals are specific, measurable, and challenging.
8. Skills-based practices with positive reinforcement builds teams.
9. Poorly structured practices with shame and humiliation destroys them.
10. Effective meetings enable teams to reach their goals.

PART 4: LANGUAGE OF A SUCCESS MINDSET

How you talk with a success mindset:

- Be direct. Short and sweet – “Do this, not that”. Present information through instruction, appropriate expectations, and kindness.
- Eliminate blaming words—lazy, stupid, idiot, useless, etc. Kids use these words to torment themselves and never forget them.
- Notice increments of success—“that pass was quick and right on target”. Base your comments on stated short-term targets and long-term goals. Kids then will learn to rate their own growth. And work harder.

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COACHING TECHNIQUES

COACHING TECHNIQUE 1

- Effective praise... and the kind that works against you
- Feedback sandwich... direction as the burger
- Everything matters... set the big goal then back it down to the hourly, daily, weekly goal where every practice meets some goals
- Assess progress and development regularly, especially after competitions

COACHING TECHNIQUE 2

- Teach body/mind techniques. Sports breath / squeeze breathe.
- Rehearse competition and steps to manage excitement and fear.
- Rehearse again.
- Take time to laugh and relax with your athletes.

HOW TO USE CREATING A SUCCESS MINDSET WITH YOUR TEAM

- Show the video at a meeting or share via text, email or social media. [Get the video here.](#)
- Develop strategies that encourage work ethic, commitment, and trust.
- Establish and manage reasonable expectations.
- Implement effective communication and motivational techniques.
- Fill out the Coach Self-Assessment and evaluate how your answers align with your goals.
- Follow the Dos and Don'ts for Coaches.
- Establish and enforce clear communication guidelines with athletes and parents.
- Avoid general praise but give positive verbal incentives. Use language that is direct and supports increments of success without using blaming words.

YOUR GAME PLAY FOR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Changing your culture is often hard, but it doesn't have to be. Changing how we teach and talk to athletes and parents are small ways that we can make each team and season more successful for everyone.

IN SUMMARY:

- A coach's impact is felt well beyond game play and can shape children's characters and futures.
- That's why it's crucial that coaches use their influence to foster a positive learning experience, on and off the field.
- Utilize resources, like inCourage videos and playbooks, to develop a program that fosters good character and positive habits in youth athletes.



BECOME AN INCOURAGE CHAMPION

MAKE YOUR PROGRAM AN INCOURAGE PROGRAM

Get a one-on-one coaching session with a nationally recognized and award winning Athletic Director.

In your 30 min session you'll get:

- Personal feedback on your programs goals and challenges
- Tips on changing the sports culture in your school
- Guidance on how to empower your coaches to succeed this year

Request a Call »

