



## PLC Focus of Week 10: Sport Teams as Moral Communities

Teams can become cohesive communities if the coach strategically works to create this environment. Teams can have a special unity that transcends the sum of the individual members. Team membership provides a sense of belonging and encouragement to all. Tough workouts become easier when done with others. Sharing makes winning more fun and losing less disappointing.

Over and above achieving a sense of cohesiveness and togetherness, moral team communities both demand and elicit a commitment to shared ideals of fair play, respect, benevolence, trust, participation and group responsibility. Teams embody and display these ideals "together" when it is easy to do so and when it is difficult. Living up to these ideals requires discipline and sacrifice. Coaches cannot command players to live up to these ideals, they can only invite them.

Coaches can build a team culture that creates a true community by coaching "democratically":

- Pray before practices and games, inviting different team members to lead prayer.
- Use plural pronouns. "Our" instead of "My." "We" instead of "I." "Us" rather than "Me."
- Hold team meetings regularly (either before or after practice) to talk with and listen to your athletes. (More specifics on this will come in next week's coach note).
- Let your players discuss and decide upon some of the team rules. For example,



**"Because I believe that the team is not my team but rather the players team, I let the players make the rules. If the players truly feel it is their team, they will take better care of it."**

Morgan Wooten,  
Legendary High School Basketball Coach

you can ask your team to come up a rule about how to treat the referees and officials during a game; and you can even ask them whether they would like to make a rule that they all thank the referees after a game no matter what they thought of the referee's calls. Be sure to have them discuss why such rules are important from a "champion" perspective.

- Ask players what they feel they need to work on together as a team and solicit ideas on how they might do this (specific drills or practice strategies).
- Host a team moral discussion when you engage your athletes in a moral dilemma and help them reason out how to respond. See sample moral discussions in the PLC coach manual, (youth coaches, p. 34 and high school coaches, p. 47).

Community is not automatically built by giving players a uniform, coaches must create a team moral community in which players take responsibility for each other and the team as a whole.

Remember, Lead your team community like a Champion Today.