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Champion Coach Note: Forming Champions

This week's note comes to us from Notre Dame Social Foundations of Coaching student Meghan Talpash with advice on building true champion athletes.

"Champions are made, not born." Play Like a Champion coaches are inspired to create the champions that are within us all. Each and every athlete has the potential and equal right to become a champion. There are many ways you can make the dream of becoming a champion a reality. Coaches that build their team in this way are teaching their athletes valuable life lessons.

1. Work for the good of the athletes

- Many coaches lose sight that their athletes are who matter. When working for the children guide them with appropriate faith, skill, and character development.

2. Team Bonding

- The athletes should know each other on a personal level, and not just by the number on the jersey.
- Team bonding creates a community within the team.

3. Let the athletes lead

- Champions are leaders
- When the athletes work together to lead the team, they learn to trust each other which encourages the athletes to



"Champions do not become champions when they win the event, but in the hours, weeks, months and years they spend preparing for it. The victorious performance itself is merely the demonstration of their championship character."

- T. Alan Armstrong

devote themselves to the sport and the team.

4. Equality

- Every athlete deserves the right to play.
- You should not single out certain players because they are athletically more gifted.
- When everyone on the team has the opportunity to play, the team is stronger and they learn to depend on each other in times of need.
- Kids would rather be on a losing team and play, than on a winning team and not play.

5. Don't let losses bring you down

- Everyone loves to win, but life hold losses for everyone
- Champions have the desire to win in the right way
- If the team loses a game, don't make it ruin the balance of team.
- Have the team learn from their mistakes rather than punishing them for it.

6. Show Respect for the team

- It's not just about the players on the team, the coach too has to show respect.
- Let them know that you care.
- Never yell at a player for doing something wrong.

7. There is no "I" in Team

- Coaches are included in the "I", and should realize that they are all in it together.
- It is: We won. We lost.
- There should be no discriminatory language.

8. Talk to the team

- You are the coach, talk to them, they want to know what they are doing right and wrong.
- Athletes want to improve, and you are there to share with them how they can.

- Give them words of encouragement before, during, and after a game or practice.
- The athletes should know that you truly care about the team.

9. Character

- Many athletes learn character traits from their coaches.
- If the coach cheats, the players will be likely to cheat.
- Teach your athletes the ethics of the game, champions don't cheat.
- Sports are to build character.

10. Enjoy

- They are young; let them enjoy the sport.
- Teach them and then let them play.
- "Believe me unless you become like little children again, you shall not enter the kingdom of God." Matthew 18:3