



Weekly Coach Note: Creating a Play Like A Champion Team

We are in a time of year when a lot of rhetoric gets thrown around. A lot of grand ideas are discussed, and results are promised. The promises of greener pastures are alluring and we hope that the idealism guaranteed by political candidates is matched by the realism of everyday life.

The same can be said of youth sports teams. As coaches, we envision a winning season where all players have fun, grow physically, and respect officials, teammates, and opponents. But just as with politics, the proof is in the pudding. How do we deliver on our hopes for creating a superior sport experience for young people? As Play Like a Champion Today® coaches, what distinguishes our teams from others?

As you know, time can slip away from us, and before you know it, we'll be wrapping up fall seasons and looking forward to the holidays. So, just as important as the vision for a PLACT team, it is vital to be intentional in the way we prepare and execute a plan for being an exemplary team. So here are some tips for envisioning and remaining a Champion team:

- Begin each practice and game with a prayer. Pick a different player to lead every time.
- After every game, or before the ensuing practice, set aside a few minutes to discuss the game, highlighting strong physical, mental,



"Excellence is not an act, but a habit."

-Aristotle

- and moral performances, and chatting about areas of concern.
- Insert a “teaching moment” at the end of practice. Highlight a current or historical event, or a fictional or historical figure that exemplifies the PLACT philosophy.
 - Develop a recurring non-traditional award, like “Champion of the Week” that highlights stellar performance on and off the field.
 - Set aside time at every practice for a fun activity. Don’t forget!

The important thing in developing a PLACT team is that you must be intentional. Set up a routine of solid, champion-centered coaching. This will ensure that your players will learn that the goal of sport is beyond just winning. It’s easy to only occasionally remember to coach children in a holistic fashion, but it’s important to commit to it, and get the most out of the season!

What do you do to get the most out of your athletes, both on and off the field? Let us know at plc@nd.edu!