



Champion Coach Note: Credit Where Credit is Due

A popular idiom urges individuals to “give credit where credit is due.” As a coach, it is important to foster a team environment that acknowledges the contribution of every team member and his or her unique ability. It’s easy to get caught up in a culture where winning is the only thing that matters. However, emphasis on winning should not be your only focus as a coach – remember to foster an environment that develops every team member’s character. A great lesson in humility can be taught when your athletes recognize and compliment others for their contributions and their unique gifts to the team – some athletes are physically gifted, and other athletes may be complimented for their positive attitude, their unselfishness, their effort, their encouragement of others, and the list can go on...

Legendary UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, expected all of his players to acknowledge an assist after a basket. For Wooden, the pass by a teammate was just as important as the contribution by the scorer. His best players, therefore, never stood alone in the limelight – they acknowledged that, if not for their teammates, they wouldn’t have been in a position to score. For Wooden’s athletes, personal accolades were secondary to the team’s performances and achievements.

Encourage the same level of humility on your team by setting similar expectations. Ask your athletes to acknowledge a teammate after a goal, basket, or exceptional play by pointing to them or high-fiving them. Create a culture that acknowledges an individual when they display effort and



This happened on March 30 – Liverpool star, Luis Suarez, made sure to point out that teammate, Jordan Henderson, should get credit for a goal, not himself.

“No person will make a great business who wants to do it all himself or get all the credit.”

~ **Andrew Carnegie**

Athlete Reflection

Have your athletes watch the video(s) and reflect on the following questions:

Hakeem Nicks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYVQDfn7b8M>

Coach K: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xztPEMf74k>

1. Do I make sure to acknowledge my teammates and their contributions to the team?
2. Do I acknowledge the performance of my opponents and their efforts?
3. Am I gracious and humble after both a win or a loss?

sportsmanship in their play.

As a coach, the key is consistency. React the same way toward your opposing coach after a win or a loss, acknowledging their hard work and performance. Wooden also said, "A leader's most powerful ally is his or her own example." What you do, as a coach, speaks volumes to your athletes. Duke University basketball coach, Mike Krzyzewski, modeled this recently after his team's loss to Mercer University in the NCAA tournament. He made his way to the Mercer locker room to compliment the players and the coaching staff for their performance.

In 2013, Denver Broncos quarterback, Peyton Manning, waited in the Baltimore Ravens' locker room to congratulate and compliment Ray Lewis after the Broncos 38-35 loss to the Ravens. Despite his team's loss, Manning waited to acknowledge Lewis's performance and his contribution to the game. Follow the examples of Krzyzewski and Manning by consistently "giving credit where credit is due" to your athletes and your opponents.