

T.E.A.M.



LEADERSHIP

COACHES' MANUAL

“LEARNING TO LIVE & LEAD A LIFE OF **VICTORY**”

T.E.A.M. OWNER INFO

NAME: _____

SPORT: _____

PHONE #: _____

“You are never really playing an opponent. You are playing yourself, your own highest standards, and when you reach your limits, that is real joy.”

– Arthur Ashe

"Champions do not become champions when they win the event, but in the hours, weeks, and months they spend preparing for it."

INTRODUCTION:

My name is Adam Winegarden. I have served as an Assistant Coach, Head Coach, Director of Leadership, and Athletic Director for more than 25 years. Every stop along the way has placed me in a different school, a different community, and a different set of circumstances – and every single one has taught me something. Through those experiences, I have developed one simple conviction: the most important thing we build in any program is not a record. It is a culture. And culture is built one conversation at a time.

T.E.A.M. Leadership is a program built on that conviction. It is directed toward student-athletes of any age, gender, or sport. At its core, this is about creating a oneness on your team – an alignment of expectations, mindset, and player leadership that does not depend on the coaches being in the room. How do we know when a program has achieved that? The answer is simple: when the players are modeling the behaviors and communicating the standards among themselves, without being told.

Whether your team is there yet or not, the response is the same – we have to get better. And the best way to get better is through an intentional plan that creates ownership. People learn through education, example, and experience. This program delivers all three, and gives your team the tools to become genuinely player-led.

As you go through each lesson, take one drop. When a single drop hits still water, it creates a ripple. When one person applies what they learn, it affects everyone around them. When an entire team does it together, that ripple becomes a tidal wave. A team that reaches its goals, improves through every circumstance, and leaves with a rewarding shared experience.

That is the mission of this program – to help you build a legacy and create a cycle of life-long success. We have a genuine opportunity to impact schools, communities, and the generations that come after us. Every player in this program was born to be special. This experience is designed to help them live like it.

Thank you for being a part of this program.

lessonsfromthegoalpost.com

“You Are Born To Be Special”



PURPOSE:

TEAM EXPECTATIONS AND MINDSET

The greatest achieving teams have a direct correlation between expectations and mindset. These teams are known as the "overachievers", they have the "it" factor, they are referred to as being the "special group." These teams will perform at their highest level based on their ability level. They inspire your community by playing with unique hustle, attitude, and teamwork.

They display these characteristics:

- 1) **STUDENT-ATHLETES:** There is a direct correlation between academic accountability and athletic performance. Great teams have responsible and respectful students.
- 2) **COMMITTED TO THE EXTRA:** The best teams are the best at doing the extra.... You can tell a lot about a team by how fast they leave the arena and leave the locker room. The best teams cannot get enough of the work and time together.
- 3) **COACHES CONCERNS:** Are tied to team execution, but never competitive spirit or effort. There is never a doubt that they will be ready to play with relentless effort.
- 4) **STANDARD OF BEHAVIOR:** Was taught by the staff but enforced through social acceptance within the team. Respect was earned by effort and commitment to standards.
- 5) **CREDIBLE LEADERS:** Top 10% are credible performers and teammates.
- 6) **COACHABLE NOT COMPLIANT:** Players apply instruction in front of coaches and away from coaches. There is a behavior change off the field and the players become an extension of the coaching staff.
- 7) **TEAM COHESION:** The team is made up of different friend groups rather than different clicks. They put aside differences and commit to a larger purpose. They have different personalities but are committed to one mindset.
- 8) **CONSISTENT IMPROVEMENT:** They can improve in success and failure. They can adapt in small (bad weather, etc.) to big change (injury, etc.). They respond with a spirit of improvement and toughness in adversity.
- 9) **ALL ARE VALUED:** A hierarchy is needed for decisions and responsibilities... But a hierarchy does not determine respect, caring, or worth of anyone. People feel valued at all levels regardless of their status on the team.
- 10) **HONEST AND CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE:** It is about getting better... point blank

" A coach is someone who tells you what you don't want to hear, who has you see what you don't want to see, so you can be who you have always known you could be. "

- Tom Landry

T.E.A.M. LEADERSHIP COACHING STRUCTURE

RATIONALE

WE REMEMBER:

10% of what we read

20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

50% of what we see and hear

70% of what we discuss with others

80% of what we personally experience

95% of what we teach others

I have been asked often: how do you know when you have a great culture?

My simple answer is this: when the players are talking like the coaches when we are not around. When it is only the coaches communicating the expectations and standards, we are not there yet. The transformation takes off when players begin speaking the same language with each other – without being prompted, without a coach in the room, because they have made it their own.

When it is just you talking, you are rolling the dice on whether you will have a player-led team. That is exactly why the T.E.A.M. Leadership Program has been so effective. It creates the moments where players have to discuss the program's standards together. When they verbalize the expectations in front of their teammates, ownership begins.

There are many ways to run this program, and you will decide what fits your situation best. What I know from experience is this: it is critical that you get the players talking in front of each other. This is unnatural for most and uncomfortable in the beginning. That discomfort is productive. With every rep, it becomes more natural. And the players who find their voice in these sessions are the ones who use it when it counts.

“Each person holds so much power within themselves that needs to be let out. Sometimes they just need a little nudge, a little direction, a little support, a little coaching, and the greatest things can happen.”

-Pete Carroll

BEST **T.E.A.M.** LEADERSHIP PRESENTATION MODEL

GROUP MANAGEMENT & APPROACH

- If possible, put groups in sizes allow for discussion. If possible, 12-15 people, depending on your situation and number of coaches.
- Lessons should last 20-30 Minutes
- Coach presents key topic & adds their own additional thoughts or presentation. The group then discusses each question. Each member is required to talk and is given feedback. Eventually players can lead the conversation.

THE FOUR-STEP PROCESS

1) READ AND DISCUSS KEY THOUGHT

- Please include personal thoughts, ideas, or experiences.
- Coaches' Guide includes suggestions to help lead discussion.
- This can be coach or player led, depending on situation.
- Any additional instruction, visuals, or correlating videos are encouraged.

2) EVERY MEMBER RESPONDS

- It is key to make them verbalize within their group. This is not optional.
- This will increase and become more comfortable as lessons progress.
- The dialogue will build trust (to share), respect (knowledge of individuals), and ownership (verbalizing core values).

3) GIVE FEEDBACK ON THEIR RESPONSE

- Respond to every player's answer. This helps reinforce that their thoughts are valued and encourages a comfortable sharing environment.

4) CLOSE STRONG

- Suggest taking up Player Manuals until program is complete.
- Revisit their goals at end of program.
- Allow players to keep them at the end.
- Players could have multiple manuals as they go through your program. Will allow them to reflect on how their goals and thought processes change as they mature.

"Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are."

- John Wooden

T.E.A.M. LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM

"To Guide Each Player to Live & Lead a Life of Victory"

T.E.A.M. EXPECTATIONS

LESSONS 1-4

- 1) **STUDENT ATHLETE**
Breeding Ground for Habits of Excellence
- 2) **COACHABLE PLAYER**
Follow the Blueprint of Success
- 3) **GREAT TEAMMATE**
The Most Valuable Asset & Experience
- 4) **LARGER PURPOSE**
Commit to the Mission

T.E.A.M. MINDSET

LESSONS 5-8

- 5) **SACRIFICE**
The Greatest do the Most
- 6) **DISCIPLINE**
The Greatest are Consistent
- 7) **TOUGHNESS**
The Greatest Face Adversity
- 8) **RELENTLESS EFFORT**
The Greatest are Elite Competitors

**BONUS SECTION FOR
PLAYER QUESTIONS & REFLECTION**

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." - Chinese Proverb

EXAMPLE PLAYER GOALS

Share this with players before they complete their own goals page.

STUDENT ATHLETE	
ACADEMIC GOALS 1) Improve my math grade. 2) Turn in all my work this year in all classes.	ACTION STEPS 1) Ask the teacher for help if I do not understand the assignment. 2) Do my homework as soon as I get home.
COACHABLE PLAYER	
ATHLETIC GOALS 1) To have an on-field role on the team. 2) To be known as the hardest working player on the team.	ACTION STEPS 1) Accept wherever the coaches put me and have a good attitude about it. 2) Go as hard as I can in everything we do. Never leave any doubt about my effort.
GREAT TEAMMATE	
CHARACTER GOALS 1) I want to get to know more people on my team. 2) To not let my emotions get the best of me and make poor decisions.	ACTION STEPS 1) Talk to 2 people a day I normally do not talk to. 2) Talk to someone or get away from the situation until I can do the right thing.
LARGER PURPOSE	
TEAM GOALS 1) Want us to be a close group that acts like a family every day. 2) Want us to be a team that nobody wants to play.	ACTION STEPS 1) Do not allow negativity in our locker room. Hold people accountable. 2) Be a leader that pushes everybody to play with unmatched effort. I must be the example of this every day.

BEFORE LESSON 1

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

-Nelson Mandela

COACH'S NOTE

This lesson gets the most surface-level answers from older players who feel like they already know what you are going to say. Do not skip past it. Ask them about their specific habits – not in general, but that day. What time did they get to school? Did they turn in the assignment that was due? How did they respond when a teacher corrected them? Make it personal and the conversation changes.

IF THE GROUP GOES QUIET: Ask: “Think about a coach who trusted you completely. What did you do to earn that?” Then flip it: “What would have made them NOT trust you?” The answers point directly back to attendance, assignments, and attitude – without you having to say it.



LESSON 1

STUDENT ATHLETE

KEY THOUGHT & DISCUSSION

Players are expected to give their “Best Effort” and compete in all areas of their daily lives. Attendance, Assignments, & Attitude are what you control every day as a student. This is a life skill; you will always have somewhere to be, something to do, and people to deal with. The school day is the breeding ground for habits of excellence. You reinforce great habits every time you show up, do the work, and treat people well. A great day in school helps you have a great day on the athletic field. There is a direct correlation between a responsible student and a trusted athlete.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you prove with attendance, turning in assignments, and having a great attitude?

You are proving that you can be counted on and trusted. This happens with consistent choices to do the right thing in any environment. You are reinforcing this mindset every day in school. Coaches play players they trust.

- 2) What education are you gaining from sports?

Athletics is the greatest way to practice life before you live it. Accountability, responsibilities, relationships, and adversity are unavoidable in life. This will occur at home, at your job, and in the community. Nothing is given and everything is earned, just like in athletics.

- 3) Go to the Player Goal Page and list 2 Academic Goals and an Action Step (what you can do consistently) for each goal.

Players need to write measurable goals and specific, executable action steps. Vague goals produce vague results. Push them toward specificity: not “do better in school” but exactly what they will do, consistently, starting tomorrow.

BEFORE LESSON 2

“My best skill was that I was coachable, I was a sponge and aggressive to learn.”

-Michael Jordan

COACH'S NOTE

The word coachable is one of the most overused and least understood words in athletics. Most players think it means doing what they are told. When you hear that answer, push back. Ask them: “What about when the coach is not watching? When no one would know? When it is inconvenient?” Coachability is a lifestyle, not a performance. The breakthrough comes when a player identifies an area where they take instruction on the field but ignore it in school or at home.

IF A PLAYER SAYS THEY ARE ALREADY COACHABLE: Ask: “Give me one specific example of a time you applied coaching when you did not want to.” If they cannot answer specifically, the lesson is still needed. Specificity is the test of whether it is real.



LESSON 2

COACHABLE PLAYER

KEY THOUGHT & DISCUSSION

A willing learner is the primary component to a great learning environment. We must be able to accept team expectations, discipline, and instruction. An athletic program has a blueprint for your success, is a privilege, and must be earned.

Your success and development will greatly depend on your ability to be coachable. A coach's primary purpose is to help you, and the team become its best version. The faster a player can learn a concept, the quicker they can be taught a new concept. Applying a coaches' instruction is the foundation of improvement. Not being coachable is the fastest way to not reach your goals.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) How would you define being Coachable?

Being coachable is bigger than doing what you are told to do. This is about a change of behavior, do you apply instruction in front of coaches and away from coaches? Great players take coaching and change their lifestyle.

- 2) How does Coachability make you a Better Player and us a Better Team?

Coaches have the blueprint for your success and are trying to guide you step by step. The path to improvement as an individual and as a team comes from a commitment to the plan.

- 3) Go to the Player Goal Page and list 2 Athletic Goals and an Action Step (what you can do consistently) for each goal.

Players need to write measurable goals and specific, executable action steps. The goal of being "better" is not enough. What does better look like specifically, every single day?

BEFORE LESSON 3

“A player who makes a team great is more valuable than a great player. Losing yourself in the group, for the good of the group, that’s teamwork.” – John Wooden

COACH’S NOTE

This lesson is typically the most emotional for older players who have real relationships in the room. The P.A.T. exercise works best when you do it live in the session – one compliment, out loud, to someone specific. Watch what happens in the room. The players who resist it most are usually the ones who struggle most with this quality in real life. Do not skip past that moment.

IF THE DISCUSSION STAYS SURFACE LEVEL: Ask: “Tell me about a time a teammate did something for you that you never forgot.” Then: “Did they know how much it meant?” That second question opens the conversation about the power of small, intentional acts.



LESSON 3

GREAT TEAMMATE

KEY THOUGHT & DISCUSSION

Players will respect, support, and encourage all on the team. Working against a team culture should not be tolerated. The TEAM will be the most valuable experience within any program. People may not always remember how you play, but they will remember how they are treated. Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much. Encouragement, help, time, and accountability are the greatest gifts we can give to others. Teamwork is the fuel that common people use to achieve uncommon results. This will be your greatest legacy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) How would you describe a Great Teammate?

Someone that not only treats others with respect but, seeks out ways to serve others on the team. Their presence makes other people better through positive interaction and genuine accountability.

- 2) P.A.T. (Praise A Teammate) is when one compliments, high fives, or recognizes another teammate. Why is this important?

Every time you reach out to a teammate, you are sending the message that it is not about you. That the other person is valued, that you have their back, that you believe in them, & that you can do this together. This must be intentional.

- 3) Go to the Player Goal Page and list 2 Character Goals and an Action Step (what you can do consistently) for each goal.

Players need to write measurable goals and specific, executable action steps. Character goals are the hardest to write specifically. Push them past "be a better teammate" and into exact, concrete behavior.

BEFORE LESSON 4

“I firmly believe that any man's finest hour, the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle... victorious.” -Vince Lombardi

COACH'S NOTE

Lesson 4 is the hardest to get players to take seriously before the season starts. When energy is high, purpose feels abstract. Save your most personal example for this lesson. Tell them your own “why” – not a general statement, but a specific moment when you remembered why you coach. When coaches are vulnerable about their purpose, players become vulnerable about theirs. That vulnerability is exactly what this lesson is looking for.

IF PLAYERS GIVE GENERIC ANSWERS: Ask: “What is one thing about this team that you could not get anywhere else?” Then: “What would you lose if this team was not in your life right now?” The second question connects purpose to something real and present – not theoretical.



LESSON 4

LARGER PURPOSE

KEY THOUGHT & DISCUSSION

What drives each person is relevant to that individual. However, when it is just about yourself, most plans will fail. Great teams are comprised of individuals committed to a unified mission. Every player is unique, has value, and is “Born to be Special”. Together we work to create a better version of ourselves and in service of others. A team can have different personalities but must have one mindset. Choose to prepare and compete for a common goal or cause. Heroes are not defined by their individual action but for the cause in which they act.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you enjoy about being on a Team?

These answers may vary but are meant for them to self-actualize that what they gain from being a part of a team is greater than individual goals. Their greatest moments will come from their experience together.

- 2) What motivates or drives you to do your very best?

These answers will also vary but are meant to connect what motivates them to their larger purpose. What drives us has a direct correlation to our identity. Help them see that clearly.

- 3) Go to the Player Goal Page and list 2 Team Goals and an Action Step (what you can do consistently) for each goal.

Players need to write measurable goals and specific, executable action steps. Team goals should reflect something the entire group can contribute to – not just individual desires.

MID-PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY CHECK-IN

Use at the start of Lesson 5, or between Lessons 4 and 5

Before moving into the Mindset section, send players back to the goals they set in Lesson 1. Without this step, goals are written once and forgotten. With it, they become a living accountability tool.

STEP 1 – RETURN TO THE GOALS PAGE

Have every player open their manual to the Player Goals page. Give them two minutes of silence to read what they wrote. Do not skip this step. Players need to sit with what they said they would do and honestly assess whether they have done it.

STEP 2 – SELF-ASSESSMENT (Written First)

- Which of your four goals have you made real progress on?
- Which goal have you done the least work on? Be honest.
- What has gotten in the way – a genuine obstacle or a choice?
- What is one specific action you will take this week on your least-progressed goal?

STEP 3 – PARTNER ACCOUNTABILITY

Pair players – not their closest friend. Each person shares one goal they are proud of, one goal they need to work harder on, and one specific commitment for the next two weeks. The slight discomfort of accountability outside their inner circle produces more honest answers.

STEP 4 – GROUP CLOSE

“What is one thing you are going to do differently in the second half of this program that you have not been doing in the first half?” Hear from three to five players. Let the most honest voices set the tone.

COACH'S NOTE

Write a brief note in the margin of two or three player manuals each session. It takes sixty seconds and sends the message that you are paying attention to the individual, not just running a program. When players know you have read their goals and will ask about them, the goals page transforms from a one-time exercise into a real accountability relationship.

THE BRIDGE

From T.E.A.M. Expectations to T.E.A.M. Mindset

Read this to your group before beginning Lesson 5.

In the first four lessons, you established the foundation. Your players have defined what it means to be a student-athlete, a coachable player, a great teammate, and someone committed to a larger purpose. They have set goals, built shared language, and begun the work of genuine ownership.

That was the first half of this program.

The next four lessons go deeper. They are not about what we expect – they are about the internal qualities that make it possible to meet those expectations when it is hard.

When the season gets long, when results do not match effort, when someone is frustrated or struggling – it is not the rules that hold a team together.

It is the mindset.

Sacrifice, Discipline, Toughness, and Relentless Effort are not things we do. They are things we become. Before you begin Lesson 5, ask your group this question and give them time to sit with it:

*“You have told us what kind of team you want to be.
The next four lessons will determine whether you actually become it.”*

Give thirty seconds of silence after that question. Do not fill it. Then begin Lesson 5.