

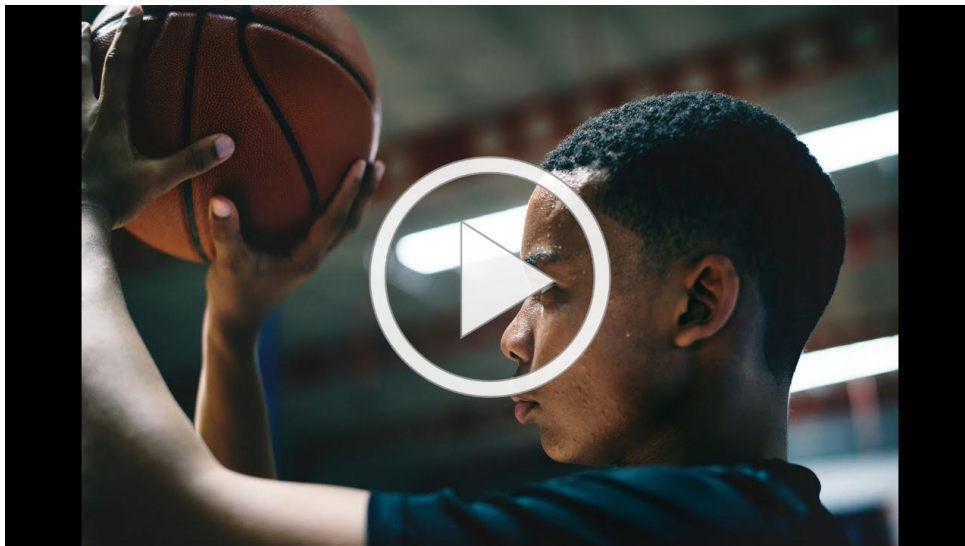
**PLAY LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

Champion Coach Note

Educating and Forming Champion Coaches

Mindfulness for Athletes



Mindfulness can be described as focusing your awareness on the present moment. For those who want to maximize their performance, the practice of mindfulness can help athletes to get "in the zone" by developing a heightened level of focus during competition. This ability to create focus is an important mental skill for athletes, but it takes practice. [In the short video above](#), high school coach and administrator Andrea McCabe talks about the importance of this concept and how you can use it to improve individual and team performance. As McCabe suggests, the most popular mindfulness exercises for athletes focus on breathing.

To practice, take time each day to sit completely still, breath deeply for 5-10 minutes and focus entirely on your breath. Once you're able to focus on your breathing, you can expand to exercises that help you to become more aware of your body and create positive inner dialogue. These exercises will help train you so that in the heat of a game, you'll be able to take a deep breath, relieve any stress you might be feeling, and achieve a greater level of focus in the moment. To learn more about mindfulness and helpful practices to improve your mental game, [read this article](#) and take a few minutes each day to practice these techniques. Just like with physical skills, developing mindfulness can help you perform at your best and take your game to the next level!

Saint of the Week: Tuesday, January 28th is the Memorial of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas has had a major impact on the Church, our understanding of virtue, and even your participation in sports. See below for more about this great saint!

Saint Thomas Aquinas: On Virtue & Play

Saint Thomas Aquinas may have been born nearly 800 years ago in southern Italy, but his teaching remains remarkably relevant to our modern world and the athletic experience. A Dominican priest, Aquinas was a great philosopher and theologian. In his seminal work, the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas affirms the four cardinal virtues originally recognized by Plato: Temperance, Prudence, Justice and Fortitude (Summa II-I, 61). These virtues make up the core of *Play Like a Champion's* **GROW** approach, as **Goals** (Fortitude), **Relationships** (Justice), **Ownership** (Prudence) and **Winning** (Temperance) create a formula for developing *Champion* athletes in any age. Furthermore, Aquinas may be a significant reason you're playing sports today. In the *Summa*, he also takes on an important debate during the Middle Ages: is there value in **play?** (Summa II-II, 168). His answer (YES!) helped pave the way for the earliest schools to provide time for recreation during the day and ultimately, to create athletic teams. Aquinas was named a Doctor of the Church, which recognizes his significant contributions to theology and doctrine. We encourage you to learn more about Saint Thomas Aquinas and to consider how his teachings impact you as both a student and athlete. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Pray for Us!



A Prayer for Athletes



Jesus, Send the Holy Spirit upon us as we play/practice today. Bless my teammates that we may have fun and grow together. Bless my coaches as they coach us. We pray that none of us get hurt. Thank you for the gift of this game. Amen.

Access Resources & Learn More at [PlayLikeaChampion.org](https://www.PlayLikeaChampion.org)

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