

**PLAY LIKE  
A CHAMPION  
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

# Champion Coach Note

Educating and Forming Champion Coaches

## Sports Should Be FUN!

With the new year still in the early stages, it is a great time to take stock of your strengths and challenges as a coach. In 2020, we're asking *Play Like a Champion* coaches to renew their commitment to the *Champion* coach philosophy. At the most basic level, this begins with the first word in our mantra: **Play**.



One of the greatest golfers of all-time, Jack Nicklaus reminds us that "You have to love a sport to play it well and love grows out of enjoyment." It's essential to remember that "PLAY" is fundamental to the purpose of sport. Young people want to play: without the opportunity to play, their growth is stifled. It's important that each young person on our teams have the opportunity to have fun and develop to the fullest extent possible by playing the sport. For youth coaches, this means maximizing the amount of time kids are active and full participants during practices, while distributing playing time as equally as possible during games. For high school coaches, it can mean maximizing involvement of all players during practice while making a commitment to communicate honestly with each player about where they stand in regard to playing time during games - and what they can do to elevate their level of play and earn more game time on the court or field.



In order to maximize *play*, it's important that coaches at all levels make having fun a priority. While sports are hard work, we should all take time to enjoy the "blood, sweat and tears" that athletes pour into the experience. In this new year, take time to think about why you got involved in coaching a sport in the first place (likely because you love the game!) and consider what made the sport fun for you as a kid.

Embrace the challenge of giving kids that same fun experience while teaching them the sport and helping them to maximize their abilities. Over the course of 2020, how will you achieve the proper balance between **play** and maximizing the **GROW**th of your team?

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**Scripture of the Week:** *Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. ~ Isaiah*

40:30-31

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# Some Ideas to Encourage PLAY

As you coach your team in the coming year, consider the following ideas as ways to encourage play and promote a fun experience for your athletes and yourself, regardless of their age and level:



- Have a team discussion on what your players LOVE about playing their sport.
- Devote part of practice to what your players enjoy most - scrimmage, games, etc. Ask for their input on what they would like to do for that period of time.
- Switch the routine. Reorder your practice to keep things fresh.
- Change up player positions, such as have forwards play defense. You may find that it's not only fun, but helps your team think differently (and perhaps unearth's a player's talent).
- Set line-ups prior to the game and stick to your decision - regardless of the game situation.
- Place weaker players in the starting line-up or to begin the second half rather than just subbing them in at the end of the game.
- Relax and enjoy! If you're having fun, so will the athletes.

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## A Prayer for Youth Coaches



Father in Heaven, You have entrusted to my care the souls of these young (men/women, boys/girls) and called me to coach them. Grant that I may have the graces I need to fulfill Your Will. I pray that my attitude and actions may always reflect Your love and care, that in all things our team may glorify You. May I have the courage to always put the development of each individual over short-term success, That they may grow physically, mentally and spiritually under my care. Help me to make this

an experience that is fun and brings joy, While building up virtue and developing skill. Be with me in each moment of this journey, I pray. Amen.

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PlayLike a Champion Today Educational Series  
PO Box 72, Notre Dame, IN 46556 | [information@playlikeachampion.org](mailto:information@playlikeachampion.org)  
[www.playlikeachampion.org](http://www.playlikeachampion.org)

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