

# TIPS FOR COACHES—BUILDING CHARACTER AND PERFORMANCE

## Know Your Role

There are only four roles in every game. You can play. You can coach. You can officiate. Or you can be a fan. But you can only play one role at a time. Fans aren't coaches. Players aren't referees. Officials officiate. And coaches coach. Know your role—do your absolute best—and respect the rest.



## Know Your Stuff

Be a master teacher of the game. Demonstrate knowledge of the sport, teaching motor skills, preparation and team-building. Know the rules of your sport. Be an accountable, motivated teacher. Make continuing education and personal growth a priority.

## Define Your Core Values

Sports by itself doesn't teach character—coaches and parents do. Great coaches hold their players accountable to standards higher than victory. What do **you** stand for? Good work habits or shortcuts? Poise or temper? Teamwork or selfishness? When we watch your team, what will we see from your players? Be specific. Have a philosophy with an action statement: "This is what we believe and this is what we will do."

## Communicate Expectations

Let parents know at the preseason meeting what specific character traits you're trying to help them teach through your sport. Encourage positive support and support of the entire team.

The mission of Champions of Character is to restore character values and raise a generation of students who understand and demonstrate in everyday decisions respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership and sportsmanship. To learn more visit [championsofcharacter.org](http://championsofcharacter.org).



## MORE TIPS FOR COACHES

### Intentionally Teach Character

Teaching character will cause your team to play at a higher level. Michael Jordan should know, “Talent may win games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.” Teach character like you’d teach any skill:

- Define—Set specific, age appropriate, clear and concise expectations.
- Model—Show what your value looks like in an action setting. Demonstrate.
- Shape—Rehearse potential problem situations. Praise good examples. Confront poor ones.
- Reinforce—Positive verbal reinforcement for anything that comes closer to the desired behavior. Use names and the specific action you’re reinforcing.

### See the Value of Mistakes

Even the great players learn new skills by trying, by making mistakes. Focus on the ELM Tree of Mastery:

- Encourage players to put forth their very best EFFORT. Praise and reward players’ efforts.
- Promote LEARNING new skills and improving existing skills. Remind players to focus on improving skills rather than on scoreboard results.
- Help players bounce back from MISTAKES. Encourage players to forget about mistakes by using signals to “brush off” or “flush” mistakes.

### Walk the Talk

People listen to what you say. They will **believe** what you do. Model the behavior you want and expect from players and fans. Use your influence to enhance sportsmanship by everyone involved in the contest. Assume responsibility for your own mistakes, without excuses.



Tips and strategies provided by NAIA Champions of Character special presenter Bruce Brown. ELM Tree of Mastery information provided by Jim Thompson of Positive Coaching Alliance.