

By Bruce Brown, Proactive Coaching

Successful coaches weave these 10 principles into all aspects of their team's activities—whether it be during the off-season or pre-season, or in practice and in games.

**Consistent and clear standards and values.** Pre-set team values are the foundation for every successful team. What is your team's identity? Great teams establish their own culture.

**The team members feel a collective responsibility to learn and follow the team values.** People commit to the team values and live it in their actions. "This is the way we do things around here" is something the team members are proud to express. The feeling is that "we don't want to do anything that would let down the coaches, the team and each other". Everyone is accountable.

**Master Teachers, Master Motivators.** This first way for a coach gain credibility is to respect and trust is how much they know and how well they can teach it. Successful coaches understand the game and their players and how to teach both.

**Positive role models.** Coaches must consistently display the team values in their actions, and it carries down to the seniors so that they serve as role models for the team values. In a successful program, the freshmen or sophomores can be told, "If you are not sure how hard to work or how to act in any situation, just watch our seniors and follow their lead." Your older players and most talented players must be your best workers.

**All roles are valued.** When there is relationship-based leadership, everyone who contributes to the team's overall value. Credit is shared. When all roles are valued, players are more willing to accept roles and the team is more successful.

**Positive rites of passage.** Intentionally created positive traditions provide a path for athletes to feel welcomed, and to grow into leadership roles. Nothing that could be considered hazing is ever present.

**Consistent performance feedback.** Coaches know how to balance praise and correction. Athletes take correction as a compliment—they are coachable.

**Trust.** With a successful team, players trust each other and their coaches. They trust their training. Mutual trust among players and coaches allows direct, open, honest communication and fearless play.

**Sense of Urgency.** There is a high-energy level during both practice and games. Individual and team discipline is visible in the focused attention and focused effort of everyone. Details are important. Only disciplined teams have a chance to win championships.

**Impact the player's lives.** Players in these programs treasure the experience so much that they carry the lessons and values over beyond the season and into their lives overall. They build successful "teams" of their own—whether it be in sports or other endeavors.