

The Power Series ©

Life Skills Training for Athletes

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Life Skills Training for Athletes

Dear Coach:

Thank you for ordering *The Power Series: Life Skills Training for Athletes*. In this toolkit you will find ideas, knowledge, and tools for helping your athletes learn positive life skills through sports.

As you well know, coaching is challenging work. Trying to meet this challenge while managing the countless other responsibilities in our lives can leave us with precious little time. We could all use some ready-made tools to help streamline our coaching and maximize our impact.

The *Power Series* provides a set of basic tools designed to help busy coaches teach positive life skills through a series of short life skill lessons. This rest of this package contains instructions, some brief background material, and a set of handouts for your athletes. But this is a just a starter kit. You can find more coaching ideas and tools by visiting www.PositiveSports.net.

Toolkits are helpful, but ultimately your greatest coaching asset is your own positive vision. If you apply The *Power Series* consistently to reinforce your own vision, your athletes will learn life lessons that will help them reach their full potential in athletics and beyond. After all, isn't that what coaching is all about?

Thank you for promoting positive youth development through sports!

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Getting Started with The Power Series ©

Follow this simple process to start coaching positive life skills.

Prepare to Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Read <i>A Quick Guide to the Positive Youth Sports Model</i> and <i>A Quick Guide to TEAM Coaching</i>. These will give you some basic background on life skills coaching.<input type="checkbox"/> Make a plan. Decide which life skills you would like to coach. Then, decide on a schedule. An efficient way to get started is with one just one 15 minute coaching session per week. You can do more or less as you see fit.
Start Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Choose an Athlete Handout from the ones provided in this package. Copy and distribute to your athletes.<input type="checkbox"/> Assign your athletes to read the handout and think through their answers to the questions. They can do this for homework or during a practice or meeting as you see fit.<input type="checkbox"/> Engage your athletes in a group discussion using the handout as a guide.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Talk about why the life skill matters○ Discuss the winning habits listed for the life skill○ Ask your athletes to talk about their answers to the questions on the handout○ Encourage your athletes to set one simple goal for improvement in the particular life skill area.<input type="checkbox"/> Throughout the discussion, use stories and insights from your own experience to illuminate the points. Trust yourself to innovate and go beyond the handout as you see fit.
Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Remember to consistently reinforce the lessons you are <i>teaching</i> by consistently <i>enforcing, affirming, and modeling</i> the life skills you want your athletes to learn.<input type="checkbox"/> Visit www.PositiveSports.net on a regular basis for more handouts and ideas to support your coaching.

A Quick Guide to the Positive Youth Sports Model

Introduction

Every good coach wants to promote positive youth development through sports. It helps to have a plan. The **Positive Youth Sports Model** (™) is an action model for promoting positive youth development through sports. In the Positive Youth Sports Model:

- Coaches, parents, program directors, and board members
- Promote positive youth development
- By teaching, enforcing, affirming, and modeling
- Positive life skills for every athlete.

The Positive Youth Sports Model was developed by [Community Health Solutions](#) based on extensive research on 'what works' in athletic performance, positive youth development, teamwork, and leadership. The Positive Youth Sports Model can be applied to athletes of all ages, sports, and competitive levels, right up through high school varsity and elite club teams.

Positive Youth Development

In the Positive Youth Sports Model the first and most important mission of youth sports is *positive youth development*. Positive youth development is the process of helping young people grow into healthy, ethical, caring, and responsible people. The process happens as young people are positively influenced by their family and community environment. Youth sports can be one of the most important community influences on positive youth development.

Positive Life Skills

The Positive Youth Sports Model uses sport skill instruction as a gateway for helping youth learning seven positive life skills. These life skills are chosen because they are essential for success in athletics and beyond.

- School Engagement
- Healthy Living
- Positive Character
- Self Direction
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Community Engagement

TEAM Leadership

The Positive Youth Sports Model calls upon coaches, parents, program directors, and board members to work from their distinctive positions to help youth develop positive life skills. This works best when we use 'TEAM Leadership' principles to:

- **T**each positive life skills
- **E**nforce positive standards
- **A**ffirm positive behaviors
- **M**odel the way for our athletes.

Community Impact

Athletes benefit from the Positive Youth Sports Model as they learn positive life skills which help them achieve their goals in athletics and beyond. The community benefits from the Positive Youth Sports Model as youth sports programs produce positive athletes and positive citizens.

A Quick Guide to TEAM Coaching

Introduction

Coaching is a challenge. Coaching the fundamentals of any sport is challenging enough. Training our athletes to play together and compete with honor is a challenge of a different order. Making sure they develop positive life skills along the way takes the challenge to an even higher level.

Yet, there are excellent coaches out there meeting the challenge and getting the job done. How do they do it?

The best coaches are *consistent coaches*. They don't just talk about positive life skills. They actively coach positive life skills efficiently and consistently, every day. They *teach* their athletes the positive attitudes and behaviors they want them to demonstrate. They *enforce* these requirements with intelligent use of rewards and consequences. They *affirm* their athletes when they demonstrate positive life skills. And they *model* the very same positive attitudes and behaviors they expect their athletes to demonstrate.

TEAM Coaching

TEAM Coaching is an easy-to-remember way to maximize your coaching impact by consistently *Teaching, Enforcing, Affirming, and Modeling* the behaviors we want our athletes to learn. The first step in TEAM Coaching is to define in your own mind the positive life skills you want your athletes to learn. Then make a commitment to consistently teach, enforce, affirm, and model those life skills every day.

Teach

Don't assume your athletes automatically know what you expect of them. Take the time to *explicitly teach* the life skills you want your athletes to learn. Define the particular life skill you are teaching, explain why it is important, give examples, and tell stories about people who used the particular life skill to achieve success. Then encourage your athletes to *think about* and *talk about* the particular life skills you are teaching. (The athlete handouts in this package are a good way to get your athletes started.)

Enforce

Like any kind of skill, life skills are learned best through consistent teaching and enforcement. Decide which life skills are most important for your athletes. Watch their behavior, and make intelligent use of rewards and consequences to enforce the behaviors you want your athletes to develop.

Affirm

Take every opportunity to affirm for the positive life skills you are teaching. Recognize your athletes when they demonstrate positive behaviors. Also point out positive behaviors by other athletes your team encounters, especially famous athletes who actually do the right thing. Most importantly, stand up for the athlete who is struggling to do the right thing. Let them know you understand their struggle. Also let them know you believe they will come through it stronger for the experience.

Model

The most powerful thing we can do to influence young people is to model the behaviors we want them to adopt. Try to model the same positive life skills you want your athletes to learn. Remain self aware so that you practice what you preach - especially under stress. And remember that you, like your athletes, are only human. If you model the wrong behavior, show your athletes how to take responsibility for mistakes and recommit to doing the right thing.

TEAM Coaching is a cycle which you can repeat over and over again. Always be defining, teaching, enforcing, affirming, and modeling the positive life skills you want your athletes to learn.

The Power of...

Making the Grade in School

<p>Why it Matters</p>	<p>Five Winning Habits</p>
<p>He was all-district. She was all-region. Both had big dreams. Neither dream came true. It wasn't their talent that closed the door. It was lousy grades.</p> <p>It doesn't matter how much talent or skill you have. You have nothing to offer to a high school or college team if you can't stay eligible academically.</p> <p>No good coach wants to spend time worrying about whether or not you can make the grade. If you are serious about athletics it is in your best interest to prove that you are serious about academics as well.</p>	<p>The better your grades, the better your options. You can do what it takes with focus and execution. Learn these winning habits for making the grade and you will put yourself in position to move to the next level in sports and in life.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bring Motivation. If you want to win in the classroom you have to bring your own motivation. This means wanting to do well. It also means being willing to do the work it takes to make the grade. And remember, you are not alone! Reach out and ask for help from parents, teachers, counselors, and coaches. They all want to see you reach your goals. Set Goals. One of the best ways to stay focused is to set goals. Set a short-term goal of being there every day and completing your assignments. Set a long-term goal of graduating with the best grades possible for you. Think about how these goals for school will help you accomplish your goals in athletics and beyond. Write down your goals and look at them at least once a week. Be There. The most important winning practice in school is to <i>be there</i>. Be there physically at every class and event. Just as important, be there <i>mentally</i>. Get yourself mentally prepared for each class. Work hard to keep your focus on the teacher and the assignment. If you find yourself floating, bring yourself back – just like you do in athletic competition. Deliver. Just like the best athletes deliver in competition, the best students deliver in school. Know your assignments. Write them in a note book to keep them all straight. Then deliver every assignment on time. If you find yourself falling behind, ask the teacher for help. No matter what, always deliver. Finish. The first step toward the next level is to finish your work where you are right now. Find out what it takes to graduate from your school. Also find out what it takes to get into a good college for you. Ask your teachers, counselors, and coaches to help you find the answers. Then map out a plan to take the courses you need and finish on time. Keep asking for help as you need it. And never, ever give up!
	<p>Think About It...</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Think of someone you know who encourages you to do well in school. Why do you think that person cares about your education? Think of a time when you did a really good job on a school assignment. How did you feel during and after that situation? Imagine yourself as a coach recruiting two athletes of equal ability. One works hard in school, the other doesn't show much interest. How much would this difference influence your decision about which athlete to offer a position?
	<p>Take Action</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Look through the five winning habits for making the grade and commit to doing one thing to improve your school work starting right now.

The Power of... **Healthy Living**

<p>Why it Matters</p>	<p>Five Winning Habits</p>
<p>Too many athletes never reach their full potential because they fail to take care of their core health and energy.</p> <p>Core health is your basic level of fitness and well being.</p> <p>When your core health is balanced and strong, you have the energy it takes to do your best.</p> <p>When your core health is out of sync, you lose the energy it takes to deliver your best performance.</p> <p>If you make bad decisions about your health, you could lose your career, or worse.</p>	<p>Develop these winning habits of healthy living and you will know you did your very best to reach your goals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Nutrition. Research shows that athletes who eat a balanced diet are more energetic. Likewise, athletes who stay hydrated deliver higher performance. Eat a balanced diet with plenty of protein, good carbohydrates, and fruits & vegetables. Drink plenty of water (eight glasses a day). And avoid those high-octane energy drinks and supplements because they can hurt you. Healthy Sleep. Research shows that athletes who get enough sleep perform better, recover faster, learn better, and gain more from their workouts. Athletes who are missing sleep are slower and less focused. Help yourself by getting plenty of sleep. This means eight to nine hours per night. Healthy Training. Be smart about physical training, aiming for balanced fitness and proper mechanics. Athletes who over-train or train without proper supervision are at higher risk for injury. They also risk becoming 'unbalanced' by developing certain muscle groups while neglecting others. This hurts their performance and puts them at additional risk for injury. If you are serious about training get help from an adult who knows about proper training techniques and the importance of proper rest. Healthy Choices. It is disturbing and sad to see so many athletes sacrifice their future for poor choices. Alcohol, tobacco, drugs, violence, and sexual risk behaviors ruin more athletic careers than all injuries combined. Make a decision right now to avoid any risk behavior which could put your health, well being, and career at risk. You are worth it! Healthy Balance. It is good to work hard at sports, but it is vitally important to maintain a proper balance in your life. Try to manage your time so you have enough room for family, school, and social life in addition to sports. This kind of 'life balance' can help reduce stress and boost your energy so that you are better at everything!
	<p>Think About It...</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Think of someone you know who encourages you to live healthy and avoid risk behaviors. Why do you think that person encourages you in this way? Think of someone you know or have read about who damaged their athletic career because of a poor choice. Were the consequences worth the choice? Imagine yourself as a coach recruiting two athletes of equal ability. One has a reputation for living healthy and staying out of trouble. The other has a reputation for making bad decisions. How would this difference influence your decision about which athlete to offer a position?
	<p>Take Action</p>
	<p>✓ Look through the five winning habits for healthy living and commit to doing one thing to improve your health habits starting right now.</p>

The Power of... Positive Character

<p>Why it Matters</p>	<p>Five Winning Habits</p>
<p>Positive character is the most important asset you can have as an athlete and as a person.</p> <p>In the athletic arena, your athletic skills define what you <i>are capable of</i> doing. Your character skills define what you <i>will do</i> – especially under pressure.</p> <p>Student-athletes who have positive character earn respect from their team and their community. They also get the most out of their natural talent.</p> <p>Student-athletes who lack positive character never quite earn the trust of their teammates. They also never reach their full potential.</p>	<p>Learn these winning habits of positive character and you will become a valued teammate and a better performer in athletics and in life beyond sports.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Honor. Positive athletes bring honor to their team. They are honest in what they say. They are ethical in what they do. They will not cheat or lie to gain an advantage. They respect their teammates, coaches, and game officials. Most importantly, positive athletes bring the same kind of honor to the classroom and their community beyond sports. Spirit. Positive athletes bring a positive spirit to the team. They are enthusiastic. They practice and compete with intensity. They have pride in themselves and their teammates. When the going gets tough, they model the way for their teammates by staying positive no matter what. Courage. Positive athletes bring courage to the team. They have the physical and mental courage to keep working hard when the going gets tough. They have the emotional courage to take risks and accept responsibility. And they have the ethical courage to refuse to cheat. Perseverance. Positive athletes bring perseverance to the team. They work hard and never quit. They keep trying to master their skills even after multiple setbacks. While others are beginning to drop out or walk away, positive athletes persevere and keep going. Resilience. Positive athletes bring resilience to the team. When they have a setback, they bounce back strong. They don't blame other people. They don't resent constructive criticism from a coach. They don't beat themselves up, either. They face the reality of their setback and figure out what they can learn from the situation. Then they look forward with confidence to the next opportunity to try again. <p>These are certainly not the only positive character traits worth developing. But they are essential for any athlete hoping to elevate their team and get the most out of their talent.</p>
	<p>Think About It...</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Think of someone you know outside of sports who has positive character. What makes this person special? Think of a time when you showed honor, spirit, courage, resilience, or perseverance under pressure. This could be in sports or another setting. How did you feel during and after that situation? Imagine yourself as a coach recruiting two athletes of equal ability. How much would their character influence your decision about which athlete to offer a position?
	<p>Take Action</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Look through the five winning habits of positive character and commit to doing one thing to improve your skills starting right now.

The Power of... Self Direction

<p>Why it Matters</p>	<p>Five Winning Habits</p>
<p>Have you ever wondered why some athletes never quite seem to fulfill their potential? The answer is often a lack of <i>self direction</i>.</p> <p>Self direction is the ability to lead ourselves toward a goal. Those who have it are able to get the most out of their talent. Those who lack it never quite fulfill their promise.</p>	<p>Learn these winning habits of self direction and you will become a valuable teammate and a better performer in athletics, in the classroom, and beyond.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Self Motivation. Self-directed athletes bring their own motivation to the team. They don't wait for a coach or someone else to pump them up. They motivate themselves by thinking about what they want to accomplish before every workout, practice, and competition. Self Initiative. Self-directed athletes take the initiative to improve without being told. Even some highly motivated athletes have trouble taking initiative on their own. They are so used to being told what to do, they seem to forget that they have the power to work out, seek coaching, read, watch videos, etc. on their own. Give yourself an edge by showing self initiative. Self Discipline. Self directed athletes have the discipline to stay focused. They set goals and stick with them. They set priorities and manage time to get things done. - Self discipline is a powerful sign of personal strength and maturity. Even if you occasionally fall short, the experience of practicing self discipline will help you tremendously. Self Restraint. Self directed athletes have the ability to keep their cool under pressure. They have emotions like anyone else, but they are able to keep themselves in check. Self restraint helps them stay focused on execution during competition – especially under pressure. Self restraint also helps them avoid trouble outside of sports. Work hard to keep yourself under control. Self-Directed Learning. Self directed athletes bring a learning mentality every day. They seek and accept coaching. They take what they learned yesterday, and apply it to what they are doing today. This learning mentality also helps them in the classroom, in the community, and in the workplace. Always be a learner.
	<p>Think About It...</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Think of someone you know outside of sports who has a strong sense of self direction. What makes this person different? Think of a time when you showed self motivation, self initiative, self discipline, self restraint, or self-directed learning. This could be in sports or another setting. How did self direction help you accomplish your goal? Imagine yourself as a coach recruiting two athletes of equal ability. One is highly self directed, but the other is not. How much would this difference influence your decision about which athlete to offer a position?
	<p>Take Action</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Look through the five winning habits of self direction and commit to doing one thing to be more self directed starting right now.

The Power of... Positive Teamwork

<p>Why it Matters</p>	<p>Five Winning Habits</p>
<p>Teamwork is critical for success in sports. Yet a surprising number of student-athletes come to their team with no real sense of what it means to be team player.</p> <p>Student-athletes who are true team players are few and far between. Many talk the talk, but not as many deliver.</p> <p>Ask any good coach what they really want in an athlete, and 'be a team player' will be at the top of the list.</p>	<p>Teamwork is critical for athletic success. Yet a surprising number of athletes come to their team with no real sense of what it means to be team player. Learn these five winning habits of positive teamwork and you will become a valued member of any team in athletics and in life beyond sports.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commitment. Positive team players commit to the team through good times and bad. They work hard and fulfill their responsibilities whether the team is winning or losing. They keep this commitment through the entire season - even if others begin dropping out. 2. Responsibility. Positive team players are accountable to the team for their actions. They take personal responsibility for showing up on time, learning and executing their assignments, taking care of their health, and respecting their teammates and coaches. 3. Contribution. Positive team players are always looking for ways to add value to the team. Some step out front to lead. Some become valuable role players. Some bring tremendous spirit. And others bring a great work ethic. All are needed, and all are valuable. 4. Collaboration. Great team players communicate and cooperate with coaches and teammates. They respond positively to coaching. They work with their teammates to master execution. They use their voice and example to promote team spirit and unity. 5. Flexibility. Positive team players are willing to put the team first. They strive to be their personal best, but they are willing to adapt their role to match the team goal. Whatever the coach asks, they try to deliver.
	<p>Think About It...</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think of someone you know inside or outside of sports who is a great team player. What makes this person different? 2. Think of a time when you showed commitment, responsibility, contribution, collaboration, or flexibility in a team setting. How did your willingness to be a team player work out? 3. Imagine yourself as a coach recruiting two athletes of equal ability. One has a reputation as a great team player, but the other does not. How much would this difference influence your decision about which athlete to offer a position?
	<p>Take Action</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Look through the five winning habits of positive teamwork and commit to doing one thing to improve your teamwork skills starting right now.

The Power of... Positive Leadership

Why it Matters	Five Winning Habits
<p>Strong leadership is essential for success in team sports.</p> <p>The coach is the primary leader who sets the direction. But every good team has one or more athletes who also provide team leadership.</p> <p>The best team leaders show the way in competition, in practice, in the locker room, and in the community.</p> <p>You don't need the title of captain to be an important team leader. Some of the best team leaders are role players who model the way every day.</p>	<p>Your job as a positive team leader is to elevate the team in ways that build trust. Develop these winning habits of positive team leaders and you will become a valued member of any team in athletics and in life beyond sports.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Model the Way. Set a positive example for your teammates in what you do and say in competition, in practice, in the locker room, in the classroom, and in the community. Assure Execution. Make sure you know and execute all of your team assignments. Then, reach out and assist your teammates who need help with executing their assignments. Spark the Energy. Sense when the team is losing positive energy. Use your voice and example to spark the energy - especially when the going gets tough in practice and competition. Promote Unity. Help everyone feel included, valued, and respected. Don't tolerate cliques or divisive conflicts on the team. Ask for help from your coaches if you see serious conflicts arising. Elevate Your Teammates. Everyone struggles now and then. Reach out to help a teammate in need - especially younger athletes and role players who don't see much playing time. It is not your job to solve their problems. But it is your job to provide encouragement and friendship. <p>This kind of leadership can be practiced by anyone, from the team captain to the star player to the role player on the end of the bench. This same kind of leadership is valuable not only in athletics, but in all kinds of settings.</p>
	<p>Think About It...</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Think of someone you know inside or outside of sports who is a great team player. What makes this person different? Think of a time when you showed commitment, responsibility, contribution, collaboration, or flexibility in a team setting. How did your willingness to be a team player work out? Imagine yourself as a coach recruiting two athletes of equal ability. One has a reputation as a great team player, but the other does not. How much would this difference influence your decision about which athlete to offer a position?
	<p>Take Action</p>
	<p>✓ Look through the five winning habits of positive team leaders and commit to doing one thing to strengthen your leadership skills starting right now.</p>

The Power of...

Giving Back

<p>Why it Matters</p>	<p>Five Winning Habits</p>
<p>Did you ever stop to think about all the people who make your sports program possible?</p> <p>Wherever you play, there are many people from your community who make it all happen.</p> <p>If you asked all those people why they do it, most would say they like to give back to their community.</p> <p>Giving back to the community is important – that’s why so many college and pro teams choose to do it. Your team can do it too.</p>	<p>Giving back to the community is important – that’s why so many college and pro teams choose to do it. Your team can do it too. Here are five winning habits for giving back.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make it a Team Thing. A great way to bring a team together is to do a community service project. There is something about working together outside of the athletic environment that lets people show their full personalities. Your team can have a lot of fun if everyone is willing to work together. 2. Keep it Real. Do something that needs doing. Every community has real needs that you can help address. Look around your school or neighborhood for services and programs that need help. Check the paper and online too. Keep your coaches and parents involved so they can assure the safety of what you are doing. 3. Keep it Smart. You don’t have to change the world. Everyone is very busy with school and sports and family life. Pick a project that fits the time you have available as a team. It is better to do a small project with a positive spirit than to do a big project with a whole lot of stress. 4. Don’t Just Give - Engage. Giving back to the community is a good thing. <i>Engaging</i> the community is even better. If you are working with a local program or agency, get to know the people you meet. Tell them how great your school or program is. Invite them to one of your games. This way you can make friends (and fans!) and promote your program or school at the same time. 5. Keep it Going. Maybe your team can start a tradition of giving back that can be carried on by the athletes who come behind you. And maybe you can carry the idea of giving back into the next chapter of your life when you graduate from your current program or school. <p>Think About It...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make a list of the people who make your sports program possible. Why do you think they do it? 2. Think of three simple things your team could do to give back to your community just an hour or two at a time. 3. Imagine yourself as a coach recruiting two athletes of equal ability. One has a reputation for stepping out and giving back to the community. The other has no experience giving back. How would this difference influence your decision about which athlete to offer a position? <p>Take Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Look through the five winning habits for giving back and commit to doing one small, simple thing to give back.