Encouraging Participation

"If we have something that's good for young people and we acknowledge that sports can help build all these positive aspects in young people, we have to make it accessible and available to as many young people as possible."

Jamyle Cannon is a man who lives out the words above as he speaks them. The Executive Director and Founder of The Bloc on Chicago's west side, Cannon uses boxing as a way to teach life lessons and give kids a sense of belonging, all while learning to love sport. By making the program available to as many kids as possible, Cannon is changing lives and earning well-deserved recognition for his efforts. His is just one tremendous example of how providing opportunities for kids to play sports can have a deep impact in our communities and schools. Sports have the potential to build character and help children develop important life skills, but we can only reach children if we remove barriers to entry and allow them to participate.

Watch Jamyle's video, then consider what you can do to get more kids involved or provide opportunities to children who are left out?

- Is my team or league open to as many children as possible? Am I excluding any children who might want to participate or benefit from doing so? Is there a way I can open registration to more children in the community or invite more kids to participate in...
At the high school level, does my school provide opportunities for intramural teams so that those students who are not selected for the school competitive team still have an athletic outlet?

Is my team or league affordable? Is there a way I can lower the cost to participate or provide scholarship funds for those who cannot afford it? Are there local businesses or other families who would be willing to cover this cost so that more kids can play?

How can I create a sense of belonging on my team or within my league? What can I do to make sure all kids feel welcomed and understand that coaches and administrators care about them?

*Play Like a Champion* is on a mission to provide *A Team for Every Child*. By encouraging participation in your own community, you can change the lives of children and give them an opportunity to experience all the benefits that sports have to offer. We ask you to continue to let *Play Like a Champion* know the ways you are implementing greater participation in your league and school.

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**Fall Webinar: Creating a Safe Environment**

Each November the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) gather for their Fall General Assembly in Baltimore, MD. This year the church’s sex abuse scandal will dominate the agenda. As the Bishops meet, *Play Like a Champion* invites our community to gather for information & discussion centered on creating a safe environment for athletes. We will host the Fall edition of our Quarterly Webinar Series on Wednesday, November 13 at Noon EST titled: *Play Like a Champion Abuse Awareness, Prevention and Reporting*. The webinar will detail *Play Like a Champion’s Safe Environment Model*, which includes a strong “prevention” component describing core principles of how children should be treated. Other webinar components include:

- Types of Abuse (Abuse can be sexual, physical, and psychological)
- Abuse Awareness (Facts of Grooming)
- Safe Boundary Guidelines for Adults and Children
- Communication with Children Guidelines
- Signs of Potential Abuse
- Code of Conduct for those responsible for Children
- When and how to report “boundary violations” and suspected abuse

The webinar will be applicable to all partners at both the youth and high school level. Join us for this important conversation and learn valuable tips for creating a safe environment specific to the athletic arena. Click below to register for free today!

[Register for Play Like a Champion's Fall Webinar!]
On October 13, 2019, John Henry Newman was canonized during a Mass celebrated by Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square. The Church’s newest saint was a 19th century English theologian who converted to Catholicism despite heavy opposition in his native country. He was a man who understood that God was calling him to something and spent his life trying to answer that call. As coaches, we can pray his words below and ask God to help us trust His will for us, seeking to serve Him in all that we do.

God has created me to do Him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. God has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it – if I do but keep His Commandments. Therefore will I trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him; God does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends; He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me – Still he knows what He is about. ~ Saint John Henry Newman