Enhancing Teamwork

Today’s note is a practical exercise for teams from licensed professional counselor and experienced Play Like a Champion Trainer Bill Matthews.

Visioning is a proven tool athletes can use to achieve success by imagining their desired results. However, when you’re coaching a team of two or more athletes, having multiple individual visions does not necessarily lead to success.

Today’s note is an activity coaches can use with a team to help build a shared vision for working together. This activity is best suited for use during the early season or off-season with mature middle-school, high school or college age athletes. In some instances, it can be used whenever a team is struggling with teamwork issues.

Here’s what you’ll need to facilitate the activity:

- A copy of A Vision from Our Future (Leader Version) for each captain/senior leader
- A copy of A Vision from Our Future (Team Version) for each member of the team
- A pencil, pen or marker for each group
- A poster sized paper or whiteboard space for each group to capture “themes”

Divide the team into groups of 2-6 athletes, with a minimum of 2 groups and preferably 3 or more. One (or more) group(s) should consist of only team captains and seniors, collectively referred to as senior leaders. After forming groups, provide each group member with the appropriate handout (above) and at least one writing instrument.

Inform each group that “in the next 20 minutes each group will begin contributing to a team vision for the season by looking back from the future.” Draw their attention to their vision sheets and let each group know that they are to work as a group to fill in each of the categories: 1) What did we accomplish, 2) what did it take to accomplish it, and 3) what did we need from captains/leaders (or teammates) and coaches to achieve what we did?

Note the times for each section (5, 5 & 10 minutes). Encourage groups to go beyond the obvious (e.g. winning a championship), and think about “what do we want to be known for?”

After the groups have completed their individual tasks, have each group report out to the full team. Save the captain/leader group(s) for last. After the first group has reported, ask the entire team, “What themes did you hear in this group’s report?” Capture team comments on a flip chart page, white board of chalk board, then do the same for each remaining group.

After all groups have finished reporting out and all themes have been captured, briefly review the themes. Here you have a few options:

- Have a brief discussion about how to turn the themes into action items, expected behaviors or habits for the season...
- Link the themes to the coaches’ vision for the season...
Schedule another time where the team can work on turning the themes into action items, team ground rules, etc....

Ask each team member to commit to making the identified themes part of each practice, team activity and game during the season.

Follow-up on this activity throughout the season, asking athletes to consider how the team is living out its vision and what actions members can take to continue making this vision a reality.

#GivingTuesday is Here! We Need Your Support to Provide A Team for Every Child

Today is #GivingTuesday, a global day of giving to nonprofit organizations that kicks off the annual holiday giving season. In our efforts to provide A Team for Every Child, Play Like a Champion Today is asking for donations that will help us to create safe and developmentally appropriate youth sports opportunities in areas where youth sports are underfunded or do not exist. Last year’s efforts bolstered success stories like the North Lawndale Athletic & Recreation Association (NLARA) and the brand new Michiana Athletic & Recreation Association (MARA). Each tax-deductible donation will assist our efforts to create programming, train coaches, and give every child the gift of youth sports. Join our efforts today by clicking the link below. Thank you for your generosity!

Donate: Provide "A Team for Every Child" on #GivingTuesday

A Prayer for Coaches

God, grant me the insight to see the potential in every player; Patience to encourage improvement; and character to always set a winning example. May those I coach always see You in my life, and be brought closer to You through me. In your precious name, I pray.

Amen.

Access Resources & Learn More at PlayLikeaChampion.org