

**PLAY LIKE  
A CHAMPION  
TODAY**

**A Team for Every Child**

# Champion Coach Note

*Educating and Forming Champion Coaches*

## Encouraging Grit & Perseverance

Psychologist Angela Duckworth, describes Grit as “perseverance and passion for pursuing long term goals.” Perseverance is something that we can all appreciate. As adults, we have likely endured some sort of difficulty in our life, having come out scarred but also stronger as a result. Perhaps we have had a physical injury that has taken away some of our ability, a period of unemployment, or the death of a loved one that has left us alone. Hard times are not something in which we delight, but as we grow older, the hard times of the past help us to keep current trials in perspective and make us grateful for what we have.



[Watch Angela Duckworth's short TedTalk on Grit: the Power of Passion and Perseverance.](#)

This past year has certainly taught all of us about challenge and the need to persevere. Young people are not as equipped intellectually or emotionally to put all of this into perspective. Coaches can help athletes review and understand the lessons learned through the pandemic, particularly the value of grit and perseverance. **Have a team meeting and ask your athletes:**

- How have we responded to the pandemic and racial justice over the course of the last year? Make a list as a team.
- What did you do personally to attend to your physical fitness? Your mental health? Your friend/family relationships?
- What lessons did you learn as a result?

Coaches have the opportunity to show our athletes the many ways they applied grit through the past year and teach them to use that to succeed in the future. One of our roles as coaches is to help athletes to understand how hardships on the field can be forces for good in their lives. Perseverance is something almost any athlete can identify with; it is a coach's job to make sure that hardships turn into lessons in endurance, rather than the beginning of an end.

So how can you encourage grit in your athletes?

1. **Challenge them:** Everyone from your starters to your most novice player should feel challenged in practices and games. Don't be afraid to let your student-athletes struggle on occasion.
2. **Focus on effort:** Praising effort helps to keep athletes focused on the process, not just the outcome. Feel free to applaud improvements in skill, but don't forget to highlight their tenacity, determination, persistence, and diligence.
3. **Make them solve their own problems:** This doesn't mean you can't help guide them, but make sure your student-athletes are a part of the process of identifying the problem and developing solutions.
4. **Give them role models of grittiness:** Talk to your athletes about your own goals and your struggles to achieve them. Every week ask an athlete to present to the team an example of a person with grit and how your players can embody the characteristics they possess.



It's often said that sports provide "life lessons." The opportunity to build characteristics such as grit and perseverance is one of those moments. With so many athletes having experienced difficulty in the past year, don't miss this chance to educate your athletes and to build them up for future success.

*"The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand." ~ Vince Lombardi*

*Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ~ James 1:2-4*

## **Registration is Now Open: Virtual Leadership Conference June 23-24, 2021**

The *Play Like a Champion Today Sports Leadership Conference* is going virtual again in 2021. While we will miss seeing everyone in-person, the virtual format provides an exciting opportunity for our entire national community to engage with fellow athletic leaders, learn from a fantastic group of speakers, and be inspired.

This year's conference will take place across two days on **Wednesday, June 23rd and Thursday, June 24th**, with our annual Pre-Conference Retreat also returning in the virtual format.

Featured speakers include NFL legend **Mike Singletary**, **Dr. Lisa Merritt** and **Dr. Amanda**



**Zelechowski**, with more names and information to be announced soon! Click the link below to visit the conference website and register now for this year's event!

**Register Today for the 2021 Virtual Conference!**

## A Prayer for Coaches



Lord, help me to be for these children a model of faith and love. Through my words and actions, may I show them what it means to be a Christian and how to live that faith through a participation in sports. May they know love through my caring for them personally and taking the time to help them grow in skill and virtue. Help me to be truly humble, that I might not be tempted by the pressure to win or to coach for my own sake, but always strive to do what is best for those you have

entrusted to my care. Grant me the graces I need to help each of these children reach their absolute best in sport and in life, and give me the strength to remain steadfast in this commitment through the days and weeks to come. Amen.

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*Play Like a Champion's "Daily Prayers for Champions" page has been updated! Visit [www.playlikeachampion.org/daily-prayers](http://www.playlikeachampion.org/daily-prayers) for more than 200 prayers plus resources that can help you and your team grow closer to God while participating in sports.*

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