

# LIVING LEADERSHIP

## The Journey to Building a Team of Leaders

### Unit 1

#### Readings

##### Unit 1: Leadership Brief

*Living Leadership: Leadership is an Everyday Way of Thinking & acting*

##### Becoming a Team Leader Workbook

**Chapter 1:** *The Personal Side of Team Leadership (p.1-3)*

#### Unit Activities

Self-Awareness

★*So You Want to be a Team Leader*

#### Case Study:

★*Big We, little me*



#### Deep Questions

What is the purpose of leadership? Reflect and answer the question from the position of a student-athlete.

Stop for a minute and think about how leadership will help you and your teammates accomplish your individual and team goals.

## Leadership is an Everyday Way of Thinking & Acting Opportunities to Lead are All Around Us!

The great Satchel Paige once said, "It's mind over matter. If you don't mind, it don't matter. The humorous facade to Paige's words hides the reality of our world. Leadership matters. And because it matters it's in your best interest to mind how you lead.

At a practical level, however, Paige's infamous quote cuts to one of the most important tasks facing you as a student and as an athlete: leadership development. If you approach each day with the mindset that "leadership is an everyday way of thinking and acting" you'll find the opportunities to lead plentiful.

Begin the day searching for opportunities to lead. Remember, you can lead physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially. End the day by reflecting on your leadership words and deeds.

Lead with enthusiasm.

## The BIG Picture

Think about it, lots of little things can and do add up to a big thing. You've probably heard that a 1000-mile walk is accomplished one step at a time. A huge brick building is assembled with a lot of little bricks—one at a time. You got to where you are by doing small and seemingly insignificant things each and every day. Being aware of the little things around you is every bit as important as awareness of the big things that surround us.

Your path to becoming a team leader will be filled with small and simple opportunities every day. The purpose of leading is to affect your teammate's lives and make them better people and players. If all you do is focus on yourself you'll miss the small opportunities to impact others who are around you every day.

Take for example championship teams. From a distance it may appear that some teams just seem to have the right chemistry. The players fit together like a hand in a glove. Relationships click on and off the field and the results are always more than the sum of the parts. While on the other hand, some teams are characterized by a seemingly unending series of conflicts and dislike for each other. Why does this happen?



### Myths About Leadership

- ★ Leaders are born, not made.
- ★ There is one standard way of leading.
- ★ Leadership must be hierarchical.

### Truths About Leadership

- ★ Leaders are made, not born.
- ★ Leadership occurs at all levels.
- ★ Having a charismatic personality is not a prerequisite for leadership.
- ★ There is not only one way to lead.
- ★ Leadership is about relationship

### Deep Question

What comes to mind when you hear the word leadership?

### Your first step leads to your next step.

The great organizations that embrace and teach leadership pay attention to the smallest of details. The first thing a soldier learns when he or she gets off the bus is how to stand and march. Soldiers are expected to project strength, confidence, and uniformity. The soldier is instructed to stand up straight, suck in the gut, fix their eyes straight ahead, and maintain a serious expression. This purposeful posture is the beginning of learning how to carry one's self as a leader. And the beginning of understanding it's not about the individual, rather it's about the team.

Sports performance like life performance; it's the little things you do as a leader that impact the team daily.

### Sharpen Your Leadership Focus

Simple acts such as telling the truth, encouraging others, being authentic, and listening patiently are leadership actions. Practicing leadership is a skill, a habit you can develop through every thought and action. When you make leadership a way of life your values change. You place a higher premium on relationships with your teammates and coaches. You work to build your character rather than to pursue something for self-interest only. You use your time and energy more wisely. In short, your priorities are reordered.

Here are some questions for you to answer. Your answers will reveal your leadership approach to every day thoughts and actions.

- Do I conduct all aspects of my life with integrity?
- Do I seek to learn from my mistakes?
- Do I naturally see the possibilities of successful outcomes?
- Do I have a positive attitude and believe that I, and my teammates, can accomplish our goals?
- Do I put the success of the team before my own personal agenda?
- Do I support my teammates in taking responsibility for their own needs and limits?
- Do I create and foster a climate of open and honest communication?



## So You Want to Be a Team Leader

### *Choosing to Lead*

The process of becoming a team lead requires you making a **deliberate decision** to become a leader. Being a leader is not a default position. You won't become a team leader by chance nor is it a responsibility for those not interested in it. It happens because you look at leadership as a way to contribute to your team and as a way to learn, develop, and grow as a student and as an athlete. Leadership opportunities are there for all, but you must decide to make good use of them. For each question below, provide an answer that reflects your desire, concerns, experience, and expectations. The intention is to increase your self-awareness as it relates to becoming a team leader.

1. How much responsibility am I willing to assume?
2. How will I cope with the stress that comes with a leadership role?
3. How deep is my commitment to this team?
4. What am I willing to sacrifice for this team?
5. How will I accept and respond effectively to criticism from my teammates?
6. Will being a team leader be worth the effort?
7. How can I make a difference in the cohesiveness of our team?
8. How will I gain the trust and respect of my teammates?
9. What are my reasons for wanting to be a team leader?
10. Can I give feedback to my teammates?



## Big “We,” little “me”

### *Thinking and Acting Like a Committed Teammate*

Erin arrived late to her first class of the day. She was still brooding about not playing in last night’s game. Consumed with disappointment in her coaches, teammates, and herself, Erin was contemplating quitting the team. She reflected on the hours upon hours invested over the past two years simply to eke out a few minutes of playing time each game. She’d set high goals for herself, and she met most of them. She improved in the weight room and on the playing field. She always gave all she had in practice and the coaches were usually pleased with her as a member of the team. However, she seemed to be stuck on starting. Playing time. Seemed little else mattered to her. She wasn’t quite sure why she felt this way, she’d always thought of herself as a very good teammate. She enjoyed working alongside everyone, held no grudges and couldn’t muster a bad word about her teammates. She just wanted to play. And she’d just realized after last night’s game she really wouldn’t get much playing time this year—her senior season.

#### *Questions for Discussion*

- Why might a teammate become discouraged about a lack of playing time?
- How can you encourage teammates to balance “me” with “We?”
- How might you unknowingly discourage a teammate from accepting “we?”
- How do Erin’s thoughts determine her behavior?
- What happens when one team member goes in his or her own direction?
- How does introversion and extraversion effect team building?
- What are the benefits of being a member of a team? (Think physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially)
- What “rewards” might a player receive that doesn’t get much playing time?

#### **What’s at Stake?**

While we all have to take responsibility for ourselves and our success in life, we need to do so in a way that honors the various wholes of which we are a part. Thinking and acting “BIG We, little me” is not about denying yourself, your needs, or your individuality. It is about realizing that you are part of a whole that is greater than you.

#### Point to Ponder

A famous proverb states, *The best potential in ‘me’ is ‘we.’*