



THE POWER OF POSITIVE

By // Julia De Simone



“When youth athletes feel they are connected to their coach and teammates, they will commit to giving their best effort to the team.”

– Jim Thompson

Nearly two decades ago, Jim Thompson founded Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) with the premise of not merely creating “better athletes, but better people.” And since its creation in 1998, it’s become the moniker of the organization.

“When youth athletes feel they are connected to their coach and teammates, they will commit to giving their best effort to the team. And the reverse is also true. Kids will not commit to a team until they feel connected to their coach and teammates. It is the relentless filling of ‘emotional tanks’ that connects athletes and unlocks all the wonderful benefits that sports can convey to kids,” Thompson blogged on the PCA website.

Today, PCA provides resources to promote a positive, character-building sports culture for youth and high school sports’ coaches, parents, administrators and student athletes throughout the United States.

And much of it is at your fingertips, including free audio-video, printable

tips and online tools. In addition, PCA partners with roughly 3,500 schools and youth sports organizations nationwide to deliver live-group workshops, online courses and books. Costs for school collaborations vary, but may be covered via grants and/or corporate underwriting donations.

In addition to an array of resources, PCA also recognizes outstanding coaches and high school athletes through a variety of awards programs:

✦ **Double** - Goal Coach Award is given to youth and high school sports coaches who embody the ideals of striving to win while teaching life lessons through sports;

✦ **Triple** - Impact Competitor Scholarships are awarded to high school athletes based on their essays explaining how they meet standards in personal mastery, leadership and honoring the game;

✦ **National Youth Sports Award** recognizes coaches and individuals at the organization’s largest annual fundraising event.



Opposite page: Patrick McDrystie giving a team meeting. Top left: Debby Colberg. Bottom left: Mark Newton. Below: Jamal Adams.



Rich Tomey, chapter executive director for PCA Phoenix, knows firsthand the benefits of positive coaching. An athlete himself, Tomey's resume ranges from former professional baseball player to business development manager for the Arizona Cardinals.

However, it was his father, legendary University of Arizona head football coach Dick Tomey, who taught him early on that wins and losses are components of competitive sports, but never at the sacrifice of good leadership.

In fact, in a March 2017 article in PsychologyToday.com, writer Marika Lindholm, Ph.D., warns that "too often, a win-at-all-costs mentality devastates young athletes. Be on the lookout for behaviors that humiliate your child...the best coaches inspire through positive reinforcement and role modeling."

Tomey concurs. "I look at my upbringing and my dad, and when I see the players he coached, all of them talk about the man he helped them become.

He's coached the same way, molding the person," he says.

This same philosophy can be found in PCA's mission in creating "Second-Goal Parents," who recognize the little and big pictures in youth sports. The little picture is focused on things like whether their child is playing the right position, team stats, etc. The big picture is about ensuring that what children take away from sports are lessons that will help them be successful in life.

PCA is composed of an all-volunteer National Advisory Board whose primary role is to dispense advice for the various workshops and online course curriculum, books and free resources. The board is comprised of an array of experts in the field, including Mark Murphy, CEO for the Green Bay Packers, and Brenda Bredemeier with the Center for Character and Citizenship. [M](#)

Positive Coaching Alliance
positivecoach.org

PCA'S TIPS TO "Better Athletes, Better People"

- We are emotionally committed to achieving our mission of transforming the culture of youth sports.
- We are professional in all we do in support of our mission.
- We recognize that effort and enjoyment tend to go hand-in-hand.
- We go the extra mile for a partner.
- We flush our mistakes, learn from them, and go on.
- We continue to innovate.
- We debate and commit rather than smooth and avoid.
- We fill each other's emotional tanks.

Source: Positive Coaching Alliance