



For Coaches of 11-14-Year-Old Athletes

## TALKING POINTS

by POSITIVE COACHING ALLIANCE

### WEEK ONE: EFFORT AS A HABIT (Growth Mindset)

- I want you to learn three big things this season: How to make yourself better, your teammates better, and the game better. That's called being a **Triple-Impact Competitor®** and that's what I want all of you to become this season.
- Let's start with **making yourself better**. The key to success is how hard we work at something. The more time we spend working hard to learn something, the better we will get at it.
- Some people think you are either talented at sports or you aren't, that you are either smart or you aren't. But that's not true. People can get smarter by working hard, and they also can become better at sports with hard work.
- On this team I want all of us to have a **Growth Mindset**. A Growth Mindset just means that you believe you can get better and smarter if you work hard.
- Some people think that work isn't enjoyable. But working hard can be enjoyable. It feels good to get tired and sweaty from trying really hard.
- On this team we want to make effort a habit. We want to come to practice every day ready to work hard and have fun. And if we do, we are going to have a Growth Mindset and we are going to get better.

#### Discussion Points

- **Are you willing to come to every practice ready to work hard and have fun? If we do, what kind of season do you think we are likely to have?**
- **What are some ways you can get better as an athlete if you work hard at it?**
- **How will having a Growth Mindset help you get better?**

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## WEEK TWO: TEACHABLE SPIRIT

- One of the most important things about a Triple-Impact Competitor® is that he or she always tries to learn more and improve. We call that having a **“Teachable Spirit.”**
- If you have a Teachable Spirit, you are like a sponge. A sponge soaks up the liquid around it. If you are open to learning and improving, you’ll soak up a lot too!
- People often stop learning because they don’t want to look foolish when they try a new skill. But the really foolish person is the one who stops learning.
- WAG is a word that helps us remember to keep learning no matter what happens. **W is for Watch.** You can learn a lot just by watching carefully. If your teammates know how to do something, watch to see how they do it.
- **A is for Ask.** Many people are afraid to ask questions because they think it makes them look stupid. But the opposite is true. It’s smart to ask questions!
- **G is for Get coaching.** Ask if a coach or teammate will teach and coach you until you learn how to do something.
- I want to give us practice developing our Teachable Spirit, so all this week after practice I’m going to ask you what you learned that day.

### Discussion Points

- **Why is it important for members of our team to have a Teachable Spirit?**
- **Do you ever feel foolish when you don’t know something? Are you willing to work on your Teachable Spirit and ask questions even if you do feel foolish?**
- **How do you think having a Teachable Spirit can help you in school or other areas of your life?**

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## WEEK THREE: LEADERSHIP (Buddy System)

- A Triple-Impact Competitor® is a leader who makes teammates better.
- Many people think leadership is telling other people what to do. But **leadership really is about making the people around you better.**
- You can make your teammates better by telling them you appreciate it when they work hard or do something right. That fills their Emotional Tanks so they can perform even better.
- A leader notices when someone does something that helps our team or any member of the team. If you help our team get better, you are being a leader. And if you help a teammate in some way, that is also being a leader.
- Today we're going to use something called the **"Buddy System."** Each of you will pair up with someone as your buddy for the drill. I want you to pick a different person to be your buddy each time so everyone gets to pair up with everyone else during the season.
- When we use the Buddy System for a drill, you will have two jobs. One is to do the drill as well as you can. The other is to **watch your buddy and fill your buddy's Emotional Tank** during the drill.
- After the drill is over, we'll have a short team conversation and I'll ask each of you to tell how your buddy filled your Emotional Tank. This will help us learn to become great E-Tank fillers, which will help our team get better.

### Discussion Points

- **What does it mean to be a leader on this team?**
- **What are some ways you can make your teammates better?**
- **Do you think our team will do better if we fill each other's Emotional Tanks? Why?**

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## WEEK FOUR: DEALING WITH PRESSURE (The 3 B's)

- Sometimes we get nervous when we think making a play or winning a game is really important. Sometimes we get so nervous we **"choke."**
- Do you know what choking is? It's when you can make a play quite easily in practice but then in a pressure moment you don't perform as well, because you are so nervous and that nervous energy gets in the way.
- There is nothing wrong with getting nervous. **Nervous is normal.** It just means that you care about what you are doing. It also means you have some energy that you can use.
- The key is to control your nervousness so you can use your energy to do your best in a crunch-time situation when performing well seems so important.
- I want to teach you a way to deal with pressure. It's called the **3 B's**. The first B is **Breathe!** When we get nervous we don't get as much oxygen into our body so we need to remember to take a deep breath. Take a deep breath right now.
- Then **Bounce!** When we are nervous we tend to lose the connection between our feet and the ground. So we bounce to regain that connection. Bounce a few times right now.
- The final B is **Break!** We do this by clapping our hands together. This sends energy through your body and gets you ready to act. Go ahead and clap.
- Now let's put them all together: Breathe, Bounce, Break!

### Discussion Points

- **What are some situations where you have gotten nervous playing sports?**
- **Do you think using the 3 B's when you get nervous will help you do better?**
- **Will you feel uncomfortable using the 3 B's? Can you do them even if you do feel uncomfortable?**

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## WEEK FIVE: FILLING EMOTIONAL TANKS (Introduction)

- We have talked before about the need to fill each others' Emotional Tanks so we can perform better.
- People do best when they get about 5 tank-fillers for every criticism. **This 5-to-1 ratio is called the Magic Ratio**, because sometimes we can do things that seem like magic when we get our E-Tank filled a lot.
- Remember that you don't always have to speak to fill someone's E-Tank. A smile, a high-five, a head nod, all these non-verbal signals fill E-Tanks.
- A recent study showed that NBA teams played better when they gave each other a lot of high-fives and fist bumps. **Non-verbal tank-fillers are powerful.**
- This week I'd like us to increase our focus on giving tank-fillers to each other. Let's really look for good things our teammates are doing and let them know we appreciate it.
- Remember, we don't want to say anything that isn't true. Don't just make up something because you want to fill someone's E-Tank. Look for true things that you can recognize or thank people for.
- Let's see if we can get to the Magic Ratio of every player getting at least 5 tank-fillers for every criticism this week.

### Discussion Points

- **What are some actions you can be looking for in your teammates this week that you can recognize or thank them for?**
- **What are some non-verbal ways you can fill teammates' E-Tanks?**

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## WEEK SIX: HONORING THE GAME

- A Triple-Impact Competitor® makes the game better by how he or she competes.
- We use the word **ROOTS** to remind us what Honoring the Game is all about.
- R is respect for the **Rules**. We don't bend the rules to win even if we think we can get away with it.
- The first O is for **Opponents**. We try to see our opponents as a gift that makes us better. We can't be our best unless we have an opponent that pushes us. That's why we think of a worthy opponent as a gift.
- The second O is **Officials**. We show respect for officials even when they make a mistake that hurts our team.
- The T is for **Teammates**. We don't do anything on or off the field that will embarrass our teammates.
- S is the most important. S is for **Self**. We Honor the Game even when it's hard because it's important to us to be the kind of person and team that Honors the Game. I don't want you to Honor the Game to make me happy. I want you to Honor the Game because it's important to you!
- This week in practice I'm going to give you some chances to Honor the Game. I may intentionally make some bad calls when we are playing to see if you are still able to Honor the Game. Do you think you will be able to keep your cool if I make some really bad calls?

### Discussion Points

- **Why is it important that we Honor the Game?**
- **What do the letters in ROOTS stand for?**
- **Do you agree with me that we want to be a team that Honors the Game? Why?**

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## WEEK SEVEN: BOUNCING BACK FROM MISTAKES

- One of the ways a **Triple-Impact Competitor**<sup>®</sup> makes him or herself better is to learn to bounce back quickly from mistakes. Every athlete, even great ones, makes mistakes, but great athletes know how to bounce back from mistakes.
- **It is better to make a mistake than to be afraid of making a mistake.** If you are afraid of making a mistake, you won't play your best because you will be tentative. If you make a mistake, you can recover from it and do better on the next play.
- On this team it is okay to make a mistake. John Wooden, one of the greatest coaches of all time said, "The team that makes the most mistakes will probably win." He knew that players who are afraid to make a mistake will not play their hardest.
- When athletes make mistakes they often hang their heads and get discouraged. This isn't good because then they are not ready for the next play. The most important play in a game is always the next play. If you hang your head after a mistake, you are not getting ready for the next play.
- We're going to use a **Mistake Ritual** to help us focus on the most important play – the next play. When someone on this team makes a mistake, we are going to flush that mistake down the toilet by making a flushing motion with our hand.
- We are also going to tell the person who makes a mistake, "That's okay. Flush it! Get ready for the next play." Let's practice making the flush motion.

### Discussion Points

- **Why is it bad to be afraid of making a mistake?**
- **Do you think it might feel funny to use the flush in a game? Can you try it even if it does feel funny at first?**
- **Do you think using a Mistake Ritual will help you to keep trying hard and focus on the next play? Why?**

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## WEEK EIGHT: OPPONENT AS A GIFT (Post-Game Ritual to Honor the Game)

- The most important word for a Triple-Impact Competitor® is **"Better."** A Triple-Impact Competitor wants to get better more than almost anything, maybe even more than winning.
- The word "competition" comes from ancient Latin meaning "striving together." Although this may seem strange, in competition we and our opponents are actually striving together.
- The easiest way to win is to play weak opponents. But that doesn't make you better, because you don't have to try your best when you play someone who is a lot weaker than you.
- If we are competitors we would rather play a worthy opponent, even though we might lose, because then we will be pushed to try our hardest and get better.
- Competition is really about doing our best, about becoming really good at what we are doing, regardless of who we are competing with.
- **And anything that helps us get better is a gift. So we say a worthy opponent is a gift that makes us better.**
- After each game I want each of us to remember that our opponents help us get better. So I want each of us to make sure to shake hands with each of our opponents and thank them for competing against us. I'd like you to look them in the eye when you say it and really mean it. We want to make this a ritual after every game for the rest of the season.

### Discussion Points

- **Would you rather play a worthy opponent who will challenge us to play our best or a weak one we can defeat easily without having to try so hard? Why?**
- **Is it hard to think of a strong opponent as a gift? Do you think you can do it?**

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## WEEK NINE: FILLING EMOTIONAL TANKS (Winner's Circle)

- Part of being a **Triple-Impact Competitor**<sup>®</sup> is to help the team do well by making your teammates better.
- One way to do that is by filling the **Emotional Tanks** of our teammates.
- The Emotional Tank is like the gas tank in a car. If your car's gas tank is empty, you can't go very far. Teams with full Emotional Tanks usually do better than teams where the E-Tanks are drained.
- One way you can fill each others' E-Tanks is to notice when teammates do something that helps you or the team and thank them for it.
- **Other ways to fill E-Tanks** are to cheer for your teammates, to give them high-fives or fist bumps, smile at them, and to tell them you are glad they are on the team.
- If our team's Emotional Tank is empty, we're not going to play very well, but if we fill each others' E-Tanks, we'll play better. To become the best team we can be, we need to fill each others' E-Tanks.
- To give us practice filling each others' E-Tanks, we're going to use what we call a **"Winner's Circle"** after each game. After the game, we'll form a circle and you will get the chance to tell teammates the good things they did during the game.

### Discussion Points

- **Do you think you will play better if your Emotional Tank is full?**
- **What can a teammate do to fill your Emotional Tank?**
- **What will you have to do during the game in order to be able to share good things your teammates did in the Winner's Circle?**

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## WEEK TEN: STRONG FINISH

- Sometimes there is a tendency to stop trying hard as the end of the season approaches. Sometimes people are tired at the end of a season so it is harder to give their best than it was earlier in the season.
- A Triple-Impact Competitor® works hard to **Finish Strong**. Finishing Strong means you play with as much enthusiasm and effort at the end of the season as you did at the beginning.
- People also often stop learning at the end of a season, but you can learn as much at the end as at the beginning. **A Triple-Impact Competitor maintains his or her Teachable Spirit throughout the season.**
- This season will end soon, and our time together as this team will never happen again. Even if you return to this team next year, it will be a different experience.
- So take the time to **really be present and enjoy it while you can**. Look around during practice and see what your teammates and coaches are doing. Try to stay hyper-aware of what is going on around you and work hard in practice and in games.
- Take time to thank your coaches and teammates who have helped you this season. Expressing appreciation to people who have helped you is a big part of being a Triple-Impact Competitor.
- Finishing Strong is also a way to say “Thank you” to your teammates, your coaches, the season, and the experience itself.

### Discussion Points

- **What are one or two things you can do this week to help our team finish strong?**

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