



## Helping Players Develop Voices of Leadership

**“[Leadership is] the ability to make those around you better. This is accessible to everyone - not just the most charismatic or the best player. It’s a requirement on our team that every player possesses some leadership and tries to make those around him better.”**

**Jack Clakr, Rugby Coach, University of California**

Leadership skills are one of the many benefits that sports, led by a supportive, caring coach, can provide. Within an engaging, positive sports environment, athletes develop the confidence, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills to handle all types of situations. As a learned trait, leadership must be intentionally and proactively worked on by coaches. To develop leadership, coaches can:

- Provide all players the opportunity to take on specific roles throughout the season, such as captain of the day or equipment manager. Captains of the day could lead warm-ups and team cheers. The equipment manager could be tasked with organizing their teammates to clean up after drills or getting help distributing pinnies for a scrimmage.
- At the start of each practice, identify one player to set a goal of the day. Have them report out on the progress towards that goal at the end of practice.
- Implement a buddy system where players support and encourage one of their teammates.
- Use players to demonstrate a skill or activity. Connect with the player before you introduce the skill/activity to the team so they know what you are looking for.
- Invite player input and feedback throughout the season. I.e. How can the coaches make this a better experience for all? What are we doing as a team that is working? What can we improve upon?

By laying the foundation for all players to develop leadership skills, the coach is reinforcing that the team belongs to everyone - that every member of the team is valued, belongs, claims a share of responsibility for the team’s attitude, work ethic, encouragement of others, and team goals.

*This resource was adapted from PCA Trainer Will Jackson’s response to an Ask PCA question.*

