



Role of the Culture Keeper

Building a positive sports experience for all athletes takes effort, intention, and collaboration. When athletes participate in a positive sports culture, they are more likely to experience the many benefits that sports can provide - from developing leadership and resiliency skills to building healthy connections and support systems. Ensuring these outcomes requires considering all aspects of a sport experience.

Engaging a few parents/caregivers as **'culture keepers'** can help ensure the principles of a team's positive culture are maintained on the sidelines. Culture keepers are tasked with spreading the word about the team's expectations and values and reinforcing sideline actions that better contribute to a positive experience.

Specific activities of a Culture Keeper may include:

- **Gaining familiarity** with the team's core values and expectations. Coaches should meet with Culture Keepers so they understand how the team operates, how they expect to react when things come up, and how they want to interact on a day-to-day basis
- **Getting to know other parents/caregivers** early each season and explaining the Culture Keeper role while enlisting their support in creating an atmosphere where athletes can better develop life skills and as competitors.
- **Distributing materials** to other parents/caregivers, such as the PCA [Parent/Caregiver Letter](#) or a list of names of players on the team. They can also pass along resources such as [Parent/Caregiver Pledge](#), [Tips for a Positive Parent/Caregiver-Coach Partnership](#), or [No Directions Cheering](#).
- **Modeling and reinforcing desired actions and behaviors**, such as remaining silent when disagreeing with an official's calls during a game, encouraging players by name, and appreciating players from both teams.





- **Welcoming new families** to the program, giving them resources such as [Ten Tips for First-Time Sports Parents/Caregivers](#), and explaining the team's culture and expectations.
- **Speaking to fans on the sidelines** and reminding them to support all athletes and have fun.
- **Staying visible on the sidelines** while wearing an indicator of the role of Culture Keeper (i.e. a button, bracelet, t-shirt, etc.).
- **Publicly thanking spectators** who are displaying actions that contribute to a positive sports experience.
- **Intervening when expectations are not met** and reminding spectators of the program's core values. If the Culture Keeper feels that they need help addressing a situation, they should engage the coach or other program leadership.

