



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND CHARACTER THROUGH SPORTS

**USER GUIDE FOR VIDEO PLAYLIST
WORKSHEETS & RESOURCES**

A Resource from Search Institute & P/ATH—Progress Through Athletics

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A Resource from Search Institute & P/ATH—Progress Through Athletics

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INTRODUCTION

Great coaches know that athletics is about helping youth develop habits that keep them mentally and physically safe and healthy, having fun, and helping kids develop life skills that matter both on and off the playing field.

This Worksheets & Resources Guide is meant as a supplemental resource for youth sports coaches to go deeper in making the best use of three short (about three minutes each) videos of famous athletes and coaches talking about life lessons from their sports experiences. The videos, [main User Guide](#), and this Worksheets & Resources Guide will help coaches build a team culture where student-athletes grow as players and people of character; where a great team is defined by more than just wins and losses.

The User Guide gives coaches a simple 4-step road map for taking just a few minutes of practice time to:

1. **Watch** the videos
 - [Jermaine Kearse - Culture of Camaraderie](#)
 - [Ezra Frech - Defining Success](#)
 - [Cat Osterman - Love to Compete](#)
2. Have a **brief team discussion**
3. Take **action** around the messages in the videos.
4. **Answer questions for coaches to reflect on**, with links to additional resources for both coaches and their teams for those who want to take a deeper dive into these critical skill-building activities.

Like everything else we do in sports, the more time you give to these themes around strong, developmental relationships and a mentally healthy approach to the game, the more likely they are to make an impact with your young people! **This Worksheets & Resources Guide will help you go deeper and make more impact!**

This approach merges decades of significant experience we've had as athletes, coaches, educators, and researchers with the evolving technologies and social media that can connect kids directly with sports influencers. We leverage sport and psychological science research about building relationships that truly affect how young people develop in the long run.

However you use the videos and the main and supplemental Guides, we think they will be a helpful resource for any youth sports coach who wants their players to grow as both players and people! This 3-video project is a brief window into a much larger resource of action-oriented skill-building; it is a great place to start!

KEYS TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND CHARACTER THROUGH SPORTS

All student-athletes should enjoy a sports experience that involves positive relationships with caring adults and peers while also having the opportunity to grow in character and perform at their personal best.

We can do this as coaches, parents, and student-athletes by creating a Developmental Relationships and Compete-Learn-Honor culture in youth sports.

These 5 Elements Make a Relationship “Developmental” —More Than Just Positive

- **Express Care**—*Show me that I matter to you.*
- **Challenge Growth**—*Push me to keep getting better.*
- **Provide Support**—*Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.*
- **Share Power**—*Treat me with respect and give me a say.*
- **Expand Possibilities**—*Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.*

These 3 Habits Create a Mentally & Emotionally Safe & Strong Youth Sports Climate

- **Compete**—*Give 100% effort at all times.*
- **Learn**—*Be an open, curious, and humble learner.*
- **Honor**—*By how you act, bring credit to yourself, teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, family, school, community, and the game.*

EVERYDAY APPROACHES

In addition to the activities we've suggested for practicing the messages of these videos, there are informal "approaches"—not "activities"—that you can work into coaching every day to strengthen coach-player and player-player relationships so they become more positive influences on player development, and to instill a compete-learn-honor team culture for your teams.

Activities are special chunks of time and structure you're working into practice. *Approaches* for building a Developmental Relationships and Compete-Learn-Honor culture are all the little things you do each day—that seem like nothing special—to reinforce the character habits, caring, support, challenge, power, and possibilities your players experience.

Special activities like those we've suggested are important, yes. But what really creates a sports **culture of strong relationships and honorable competitive character** are all the things that are just woven seamlessly and automatically into "how we do things."

Here are some ideas to get you started!

- 1. Developmental Relationships Brainstorm**, and a tennis coaching example—details on the next page.
- 2. Guiding Questions to Integrate Approaches into Your Everyday Work**, and a tennis coaching example—details following the Developmental Relationships Brainstorm.
- 3. To go deeper into the values behind the Compete-Learn-Honor approach**, do these quick reads:
 - the blog, "[The 3 Most Important Words in Youth Sports](#)," (4 minute read)
 - the Preface (8 minute read) in Scales' book, [Mental and Emotional Training for Tennis: Compete-Learn-Honor](#) (Coaches Choice, 2019)
- 4. Get concrete about your coaching philosophy. Do the My Coaching Philosophy Worksheet.**
 - Write down your coaching philosophy and the values that shape it.
 - Hang it up, put on your phone, or wherever you will be sure to see it every day.
 - Use it to guide your practice plans—how are your philosophy and values getting emphasized in what you do at practice?
 - MODEL your coaching philosophy and values in how you relate with players, parents, and others—are you walking your talk? What can you as a coach model more often or better?
 - Be consistent and fair in how you enforce and reward players around effort, eagerness to learn, and honorable behavior. What can you do as a coach to be more consistent and fair in shaping those habits?

Developmental Relationships Brainstorm for Coaches¹

Use this worksheet to identify approaches you can take in your planning that will add or strengthen opportunities for relationship building in your work with your student-athletes. Use the guiding questions here as resources for your planning.

Action or Event to Make More Relational: _____

EXPRESS CARE

- How might you build in more opportunities for listening to your players?
- What could you do during this time to show your student-athletes that you enjoy being with them?
- How do you plan to recognize their efforts and achievements in order to encourage them?

CHALLENGE GROWTH

- How do you plan to communicate your expectation for your players to live up to their potential during this experience?
- How might you use this opportunity to help your student-athletes stretch to do more than they knew they were able to do?
- If they are having trouble with the task, how might you use the opportunity to help them learn from the setback?

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PROVIDE SUPPORT

- How might you use this opportunity to help your players learn how to navigate difficult situations or systems?
- How might you use this opportunity to help them build their confidence and feel empowered to achieve their goals?
- What kinds of material supports might your student-athletes need (e.g. food, materials, transportation) in order to be successful, and how might those supports be provided?

Share Power

- How might you demonstrate to your players that you take their ideas seriously through this experience? If you ask for their feedback, how will you show them what you do with their feedback?
- How might you actively involve your student-athletes in decision-making and/or collaborate with them to solve problems?
- Are there opportunities here to let your players take the lead?

Expand Possibilities

- Are there opportunities to help your players imagine career possibilities, civic engagement opportunities, or other potential future pursuits related to this experience?
- How might you use this opportunity to expose your student-athletes to new ideas, experiences and/or places? Are there resources you could recommend for them to watch, listen to or read to learn more about this subject?
- How might you use this opportunity to connect your players to others who can help them grow?

Example: Developmental Relationships Brainstorm²

Here's an example of a filled out worksheet, done by one of us who is a high school tennis coach.

Action or Event to Make More Relational: **Tennis Strengths Self-Assessment players do at the start of the season**

EXPRESS CARE

- How might you build in more opportunities for listening to your players?
- What could you do during this time to show your student-athletes that you enjoy being with them?
- How do you plan to recognize their efforts and achievements in order to encourage them?
- *Create a caring and safe space for doing the activity by discussing how all athletes - including their coaches! - are always still learners.*
- *Remind players that these ratings aren't judgments of whether you're a good or bad player, just naming targets for learning.*
- *Praise them for doing it honestly, and compliment their self-analysis.*
- *Ask them how it felt to do this exercise, and what they learned.*

CHALLENGE GROWTH

- How do you plan to communicate your expectation for your players to live up to their potential during this experience?
- How might you use this opportunity to help your student-athletes stretch to do more than they knew they were able to do?
- If they are having trouble with the task, how might you use the opportunity to help them learn from the setback?
- *Ask them what they were thinking when they gave a rating to a specific skill, to get a little more descriptive.*
- *Brainstorm possible goals related to the way they rated their various skills, what they want to work on, and what it will take.*
- *Encourage them to set goals that are a little hard to reach, and regularly remind them that their effort and enjoyment is more important than winning games, even though we do of course want to win*
- *Create drills and activities that are fun and challenging.*
- *Keep setting new goals as their skills improve.*
- *Focus on challenge growth not in terms of wins or titles, but in terms of how players can grow beyond what they imagined.*
- *Remind them that learning and improvement rarely occurs in a straight line. It also involves regressions and going sideways at times.*

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PROVIDE SUPPORT

- How might you use this opportunity to help your players learn how to navigate difficult situations or systems?
- How might you use this opportunity to help them build their confidence and feel empowered to achieve their goals?
- What kinds of material supports might your student-athletes need (e.g. food, materials, transportation) in order to be successful, and how might those supports be provided?
- *Create activities and drills that gradually help the student-athlete create new habits, i.e., “progressions” from more basic to more advanced aspects of the skill.*
- *Show them how to accept frustration and setbacks as they’re learning, as just part of the fun of getting better and exploring their sport more deeply.*
- *If they get stuck, remind them that this happens to us all, and we try together to figure out what is causing the blockage of skill development, whether it’s technical, mental-emotional, or something else.*
- *Treat it not as a personal failure or character flaw, but as just another puzzle to try to solve.*

SHARE POWER

- How might you demonstrate to your players that you take their ideas seriously through this experience? If you ask for their feedback, how will you show them what you do with their feedback?
- How might you actively involve your student-athletes in decision-making and/or collaborate with them to solve problems?
- Are there opportunities here to let your players take the lead?
- *The whole self-rating exercise is a share power activity.*
- *As their coach, tell them that all I am is their guide, but that they are the boss of their sport career, they are the ones who have to decide what to focus on, what to prioritize, how much effort to put in, etc. It is a choice—their choice, not mine!*
- *When we get into play situations, freeze the action after a point ends, and ask the players how they felt about their choices in that moment—what worked and they’d like to repeat in a similar situation, what didn’t work and how they might do it differently next time, why they did what they did and what the result was they hoped for, etc.*
- *Use their self-ratings to shape what we do each day, so they can see that I didn’t just listen to them, but used their thoughts to structure the activities.*

EXPAND POSSIBILITIES

- Are there opportunities to help your players imagine career possibilities, civic engagement opportunities, or other potential future pursuits related to this experience?
- How might you use this opportunity to expose your student-athletes to new ideas, experiences and/or places? Are there resources you could recommend for them to watch, listen to or read to learn more about this subject?
- How might you use this opportunity to connect your players to others who can help them grow?
- *Expose them to new ways of thinking about technique, strategy, conditioning, the mental game, etc., in the process challenging myths in the sport*
- *Refer them to other online resources. Encourage them to take outside lessons with other pros too—it’s great to have multiple coaches. Even though it can be confusing to hear different advice, we all have different ways of saying the same thing, and they might grasp an idea better from one coach than another on a specific issue.*
- *Encouraging them to think of themselves as a student-ATHLETE is also an expansion of their ideas about themselves. Many haven’t previously thought of themselves as especially athletic.*
- *Apply whatever we do on the tennis court to other situations off the court.*

Guiding Questions to Integrate Approaches into Your Everyday Coaching³

Ask yourself these questions to identify developmental relationship approaches that could make your work with your players more relational. They can help you plan to intentionally use the five elements of the Developmental Relationships Framework (Express Care, Challenge Growth, Provide Support, Share Power, Expand Possibilities) when leading sports practice or coaching during contests.

1. Briefly describe an action that you take or an event that occurs regularly in your work with your student-athletes that you would like to make more relational using the five elements of the Developmental Relationships Framework?
2. What opportunities does this action or event present for building relationships?
3. What barriers (if any) to relationship building may exist in your plan?
(For example, are there ways that your plan may need to be modified to allow more time and space to Express Care or Provide Support in order to balance a task that is perceived as very challenging or not enjoyable?)
4. What personal or programmatic goals do you hope to work toward or achieve by making this activity or event more relational?
5. How might you invite your players to be part of your planning? Are there ways to solicit and use their feedback? Can you involve them in decision making, or provide them with options to choose between? Could you possibly use this opportunity to let your student-athletes take the lead in facilitating, or taking on other leadership responsibilities?

³ From Search Institute (2021) *The Relationship Builder's Guidebook*. Minneapolis, MN ©Search Institute. All Rights Reserved.

Example: Guiding Questions to Integrate Approaches into Your Everyday Coaching⁴

Here's an example of the Guiding Questions worksheet, filled out by one of us who is a high school tennis coach.

1. Briefly describe an action that you take or an event that occurs regularly in your work with your student-athletes that you would like to make more relational using the five elements of the Developmental Relationships Framework?

Prior to tennis lessons or the start of the season, I give student-athletes a brief self-assessment where they rate their tennis strengths and areas for development. Then we use those to construct plans for individual lessons and team practices.

2. What opportunities does this action or event present for building relationships?

I have to start off with showing youth that this is a caring and safe place where they can be vulnerable, reflect with honesty, and share with me genuine feelings about their skills. This exercise will help make sure instruction grows out of their own expressed interests and analysis and goal setting, so it feels both challenging and doable to players, and that they get lots of support to pursue those tennis goals. It is easy for players to get discouraged and overly judgmental about themselves, so this presents a real opportunity to show acceptance and love of the players as people, not conditioned on their performance, which is critical to their being able to accept mistakes as part of an ongoing growth process.

3. What barriers (if any) to relationship building may exist in your plan?

(For example, are there ways that your plan may need to be modified to allow more time and space to Express Care or Provide Support in order to balance a task that is perceived as very challenging or not enjoyable?)

It could be an independent one-way task: the player completes the assessment and gives it to me. If I don't ensure that the player feels comfortable sharing with me, the player might not be willing to be honest about what are strengths and what are areas for development. I need to avoid players perceiving me as too judgmental or that I'm taking an authoritarian perspective after getting the ratings. Instead, I want them to know that I'm using the ratings as the start of ongoing conversation with the player about what's important to work on right now and for longer-term goals.

4. What personal or programmatic goals do you hope to work toward or achieve by making this activity or event more relational?

Introduce and/or strengthen the players' sense that we—the player and I as their coach—are a team. I want us both to enjoy our time together and grow as player, coach, and human beings.

5. How might you invite your players to be part of your planning? Are there ways to solicit and use their feedback? Can you involve them in decision making, or provide them with options to choose between? Could you possibly use this opportunity to let your student-athletes take the lead in facilitating, or taking on other leadership responsibilities?

Make sure the player knows that what I do as a coach is to help them grow by serving them, and that their ability to improve as a player and people is all their choice, is in their power. Make sure the goals we set together are co-created, so I am not imposing my own agenda on the player's growth.

⁴ From Search Institute (2021) *The Relationship Builder's Guidebook*. Minneapolis, MN ©Search Institute. All Rights Reserved.

The 3 Most Important Words in Youth Sports⁵

By Coach Pete Scales, Ph.D., USPTA

There are three words no youth sports coach or parent wants to hear: “Coach, I quit,” or “Mom, I quit.”

Actually, neither you as a parent nor the coach are likely to hear it in that direct of a way. Like dropping out of school, it’s most often not that dramatic. It’s something that builds and builds, and for 70% of kids by the time they’re 13, that long decline just ends with, I quit.

But there are 3 other words that define a youth sports coaching and parenting philosophy that will make it far less likely your child will quit: Compete-Learn-Honor⁵, an approach I created years ago.

For many years, I’ve coached grade-schoolers to college, sometimes in basketball but mostly in tennis, and mostly high school boys and girls, but the results are the same: When coaches build a Compete-Learn-Honor culture and when parents understand and support that, kids have a better time in their sports, more fun, and they learn more. So, guess what? They get better, too.

I encourage both coaches and parents to redefine success away from winning and losing.

Success is simple: Are we improving as players and as people? Are we safe? Are we having fun? That’s what success looks like in youth sports. And using a core approach of Compete-Learn-Honor is how you get there.

I actually teach them in reverse: Honor is the foundation for all Learning and Competitive development.

Honor: By how we behave, are we bringing credit to ourselves, our teammates, coaches, opponents, officials, family, school, community, and the game we play? Are we loving the game more than how we do at it, recognizing that the game is bigger than we are? Are we taking responsibility for how we play, and not making excuses? Are we building everyone up and being a great supportive teammate, or are we tearing people down? Do we give every benefit of the doubt to our opponent, or do we slide on and massage rules and codes of conduct in order to win? Is every player treated as equally valuable and cared about, regardless of their skill level or ranking, or other differences?

Learn: Do the coaches teach us to be open, curious, and humble learners? Does the coach create a culture where it’s emotionally and physically safe to try new skills and not succeed at first? Is everyone treated as a lifelong learner, from coaches and parents to experienced

⁵ Reprinted from *I love to watch you play* - ilovetowatchyouplay.com/2021/06/16/the-3-most-important-words-in-youth-sports

players and those brand new to the game? Is the coach enthusiastic about partnering with parents and helping parents learn why they're doing what they do, so parents grow in their interest in and appreciation of the game their child is playing?

Compete: This is all about effort and energy: Do we give 100% of everything we have on any given day, at practice, and on game day? That doesn't mean give the best that we can ever be all the time. That's not possible even for pros. And it certainly doesn't mean playing hurt. But if we're 60% of our best today, do we give 100% of that 60%? Do we enjoy the process, loving the battle and trying to solve the puzzle of a match or game or meet, or do we only have fun if we win?

Winning is not under your child's control, yours, or your child's coach's. It's a by-product.

Winning isn't necessary. Giving your all, always learning, and acting with positivity and admirable character is what's necessary in youth sports.

And ironically, having a Compete-Learn-Honor approach as a coach and a parent will give your child's teams a better chance of winning, without focusing on winning.

Compete-Learn-Honor are the 3 most important words in youth sports, and they lead to more fun for everyone!

My Coaching Philosophy Worksheet⁶

Coaches who have a written coaching philosophy will be better able to manage the many jobs a coach has, and give student-athletes and their families what they need: A sports experience that is safe and fun, while being challenging and giving them plenty of opportunities to grow as players and as people. Respond to these questions. Then use your responses to construct a BRIEF coaching philosophy to communicate to everyone (boil it down to 1 or 2 sentences max!).

1. What are the key values I want our sports program to exemplify, teach, and model?
2. What are my goals for the program? What do we want to accomplish by the end of our seasons?
3. What's the emphasis I want our program to put on winning? Where does it stand in importance?
4. Who has a stake in what our program does and how we do it? How do I want to involve them and communicate with them?

⁶ From Peter C. Scales. (2022). *The Compete-Learn-Honor™ Playbook: Simple Steps to Take Your Mental & Emotional Skills for Tennis & Pickleball to a New Level*. Monterey, CA: Coaches Choice. ©Peter C. Scales 2022. All Rights Reserved

The Stars That Guide Us⁷

For thousands of years, the way people navigated on land and sea was by using the position and movement of the stars to guide them.

EVERYONE:

Please list three to five **values that serve as the stars that help you navigate in your life**. You can choose values from the list of examples below, or write down other values that are important to you. Once you write down your values, write a few words to explain why you chose each one.

Examples:

My Stars

(List at least 3 and up to 5 values)

Compassion	Gratitude	Fun	Learning	Authenticity	Courage	Humor
Kindness	Loyalty	Balance	Creativity	Equality	Hard work	Respect
Belonging	Dependability	Excellence	Honesty	Responsibility	Empathy	Determination
Faith	Independence	Security	Cheerfulness	Freedom	Fairness	Justice
Adventure	Service	Community	Generosity	Family	Leadership	Trustworthiness

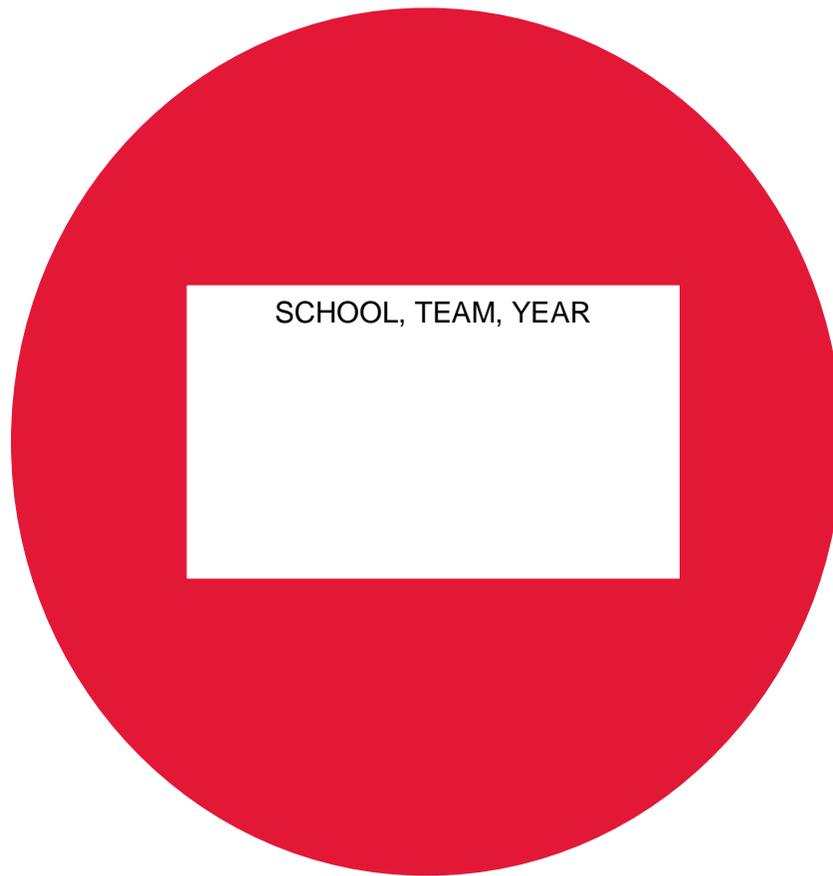
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

COACH:

- On big poster paper, list 2 columns: My Values—Our Values.
- Each player and coach write ONE value in the My Values column.
- Do another round or two, until no new values are named.
- Each player then vote for the TOP most important value they think should be in the Our Values column.
- Continue for the 2nd most important value, and so on for up to 10 “Our” Values.
- Discuss and choose which ones should be our TOP 3 values as a team.
- Put a big STAR next to those.
- Laminate the poster and hang it up during practices.
- Players and coaches take a picture of it for their phones.

⁷ From Search Institute (2021) *The Relationship Builder's Guidebook*. Minneapolis, MN ©Search Institute. All Rights Reserved.

The Name Circle⁸



- Do after a week- two weeks of players getting to know each other
- Everyone write names AROUND the OUTSIDE of the circle
- Can do all players all at once for lots of energy, or one at a time for more of a ceremony feel
- When finished, everyone take photos of it, and Coach say what it symbolizes (hang it in the club, locker room, on the fence, etc.):
 - The circle is the sport you're playing, and we are just small points on it—the game is bigger than we are or any one of us is
 - Names around the circle symbolize that none of us is more important or valuable or worthy than anyone else--#12 is as important and valuable and worthy as #1. Our wins count the same, and our losses hurt just as much
 - The circle and our names are unbroken, symbolizing our commitment to be there for each other, to compete, learn, and honor, and build each other up, not tear each other down

⁸ From Peter C. Scales. (2022). *The Compete-Learn-Honor™ Playbook: Simple Steps to Take Your Mental & Emotional Skills for Tennis & Pickleball to a New Level*. Monterey, CA: Coaches Choice. ©Peter C. Scales 2022. All Rights Reserved

Count to Twenty¹⁰

In this “harder than it sounds” challenge, team members count to twenty as a group. Each student must say at least one number, but no two players may speak at the same time or say the same number.

This is a fun activity that builds and strengthens relationships among teammates and gives them more understanding of how to solve problems together.

COACH NOTES:

- In this activity, the coach should play a guiding role rather than participating with the group.
 - Depending on how strong communication is among your team members, this activity may be easy or hard. If you think it will be hard for your team, have them start by counting to ten instead of twenty.
 - If you think it may be easy for your team, consider the following added challenges:
 - Participants stand in a circle facing outwards so they cannot see each other.
 - Have participants count to a higher number or say the alphabet.
 - Count backwards down from twenty.
 - Count by 2s, 5s, etc.
 - Say the names of everyone in the team - all names need to be said, but no one can say their own name.
 - Take away the option for team members to use whichever strategies they have come up with (for example, going around the circle or using hand signals to communicate).
1. Remind the team that challenging growth is about pushing ourselves to go farther than we thought we could while learning from mistakes and setbacks. This activity will involve pushing ourselves to overcome a challenge and learning from our mistakes to get better each time.
 2. Instruct players to sit or stand in a circle, making sure everyone can see and hear everyone else.
 3. Explain that the challenge the group will be facing will be to count to twenty aloud as a group. **There are only two rules the group must follow. First, every participant must say at least one number. Second, two participants cannot say the same number. If two people say the same number, the whole group needs to start over at one.**
 4. After sharing the directions, say “Go” and let the players begin. During the first one or two attempts, the coach should observe and not provide any advice or guidance. After the group has failed a couple times, provide coaching using the following questions:
 - How do you think you are doing?
 - What is challenging about this activity?
 - What’s going wrong?
 - What can you do differently in the next attempt?

¹⁰ From Search Institute (2021) *The Relationship Builder’s Guidebook*. Minneapolis, MN ©Search Institute. All Rights Reserved.

Note: There are a few strategies team members can come up with that help with this challenge:

- Go around the circle, taking turns saying numbers in order.
- Choose silent actions or hand signals to communicate with one another about who will say which numbers.

Do not provide these ideas to the team, but coach them toward setting up a system or specific order to use if they are not getting there on their own after multiple tries.

5. After a short discussion, have the group try counting to twenty again. Depending on how well the group is doing, you can let them continue making attempts or pause for a second coaching discussion.
As needed, guide them toward working as a group to develop a strategy to complete the activity. Strategies can include going around the circle or creating a signal to one another that helps them communicate who will say which number(s).
6. Once the group successfully counts to twenty, lead a reflection. (If team members are able to do this easily and quickly, try some of the other challenges above.)

Reflect

- During the first few tries, did you feel like it would be possible for the group to succeed?
- How did it feel when the group failed?
- How did it feel if/when you were the person who caused the group to fail? What about when someone else caused the group to fail?
- What strategies did you use to improve over time?
- Were there points where you felt frustrated or wanted to give up?
- What did you do to overcome that?
- When you face a setback or failure in your life, how can you use it as a learning opportunity?
- What can we do as a team to support each other in overcoming and learning from challenges?

Taking Action (optional)

Focus on how your team will approach dealing with and learning from mistakes or failures together. If your team typically does things in small groups or independently, focus on actions individual participants can take to support each other and/or to ask for help when dealing with setbacks or failures.

Adapted from: Mandell, J., & Wolf, J. (2003). *Acting, learning and change: Creating original plays with adolescents*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Goals & Obstacles Worksheet¹³

List in column 1 the 3 areas in your sport you want MOST to work on.

Don't list more than 3-5 improvement areas or it will feel overwhelming!

And remember: Have BIG dreams, but SMALL goals that are achievable with some stretch!

In column 2, for each of your 3-5 improvement areas, write down a) a short-term goal (over the next few weeks) and b) a medium-term goal (over the next few months) that you could reasonably expect to reach, if you put in the consistent practice.

In column 3, write down any obstacles or things that could prevent you from reaching that goal, and what you could do to overcome that obstacle.

BONUS: Share your Goals & Obstacles Worksheet with a teammate who can keep you accountable and give you support!

Improvement Area	Goal(s)	Obstacle(s) and Response
1.	a. b.	
2.	a. b.	
3.	a. b.	

¹³ From Peter C. Scales. (2022). *The Compete-Learn-Honor™ Playbook: Simple Steps to Take Your Mental & Emotional Skills for Tennis & Pickleball to a New Level*. Monterey, CA: Coaches Choice. ©Peter C. Scales 2022. All Rights Reserved

Learning From Failures and Mistakes¹⁴

- Write the following question on poster paper so students can see it as they watch the video: “In your opinion, which person in the video had to work through the biggest challenge?”
- WATCH this YouTube video: [“Famous Failures Before Success”](#)
- As a group, reflect on the video using the questions listed below.
 - a. In your opinion, which person in the video had to work through the biggest challenge? Why?
 - b. Why do you think so many successful people have had big failures and obstacles in their lives? Is that a coincidence or could there be another reason for it?
 - c. What are some of the things that can help people learn from their mistakes or failures? Are there things people can do that really help?

If participants don't come up with ideas easily on their own, help them think about how the people in the video succeeded because they challenged themselves, took risks, and learned from their failures.

¹⁴ From Search Institute (2021) *The Relationship Builder's Guidebook*. Minneapolis, MN ©Search Institute. All Rights Reserved.

What I Love About Playing This Sport Worksheet¹⁵

Worksheet modified from *USTA Mental Drills and Skills Handbook*, Worksheet 6-1
By Larry Lauer, Daniel Gould, Paul Lubbers, & Mark Kovacs, Eds. (2010). *USTA Mental Skills and Drills Handbook*. Monterey, CA: Coaches Choice).

Instructions: The purpose of this exercise is to help you develop motivating cue words, phrases, and images. To create these, you first need to remember WHY you play _____ (insert your sport). What drives you to compete? From answering this question, you should be able to develop personally meaningful cue words, phrases, or images. Complete this question, keeping in mind your personal reasons for playing (insert your sport).

Why do you play _____ (insert your sport)? What do you love about playing _____ (insert your sport)? (Think about why you started playing _____ (insert your sport), the aspects of the game you enjoy, and your long-term goals, such as, I enjoy competing against others.)

¹⁵ From Peter C. Scales. (2022). *The Compete-Learn-Honor™ Playbook: Simple Steps to Take Your Mental & Emotional Skills for Tennis & Pickleball to a New Level*. Monterey, CA: Coaches Choice. ©Peter C. Scales 2022. All Rights Reserved

Sports Journal Template¹⁶

These journal notes are for YOU, not your coach. Be honest, be real, have fun with it! And read your journal notes often. It will help keep you focused and positive about your sports journey this season!

A. My Goals for the Season (Emphasize Process & Performance Goals more than Outcome Goals):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. COMPLETE EVERY DAY

	Today I'm GRATEFUL for...	Today's Practice Goal/Focus is...	Today I LEARNED...
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			

C. COMPLETE EVERY WEEK:

- This week, I learned... _____

- This week, I was challenged by...and I did this about it... _____

- This week, I was a great teammate by... _____

¹⁶ From Peter C. Scales. (2022). *The Compete-Learn-Honor™ Playbook: Simple Steps to Take Your Mental & Emotional Skills for Tennis & Pickleball to a New Level*. Monterey, CA: Coaches Choice. ©Peter C. Scales 2022. All Rights Reserved

Mystery Person¹⁷

1. Hand out identical sheets of paper and a pen or pencil for each participant. Tell them to write their name on the paper, and a list numbered 1-3.
2. After they have written the numbers on their paper, ask participants to **write beside each number one good thing about themselves that people in the group might not know.**
 - Elaborate that these strengths can be important, small, serious, or silly things. But they all have to be true, and they all should be positive.
 - Coach should also participate and be willing to share.
 - Let team members know that what they write will be read aloud by a teammate, so they should try to write clearly and write things that they are comfortable sharing with the group.
3. Ask players to fold their papers in half after they have written their three strengths.
4. Collect all of the folded papers and put them in a container that is big enough for players to pull from. COACH: Be sure to add your own paper as well.
5. Ask for a volunteer to begin the process of finding each Mystery Person. The first volunteer should come to the middle of the circle, pick a sheet of paper, and read it out loud. Remind the reader to be respectful of whatever the other person has written, and not to read the name on the paper.
6. The volunteer then will accept three guesses from the team on who the Mystery Person is, so that everyone is engaged and thinking about who would fit these strengths.
 - If a volunteer guesses correctly, congratulate them (and give them a prize if you are offering one). Invite them to come to the front to take the next turn in reading another mystery paper.
 - If nobody can guess the Mystery Person, ask the individual to identify themselves or the reader to read the name. It will then be the Mystery Person's turn to read a mystery paper out loud next.

Reflect:

Discuss 1 or more of these questions as a team:

1. What is the most unexpected thing you learned about a teammate?
2. Did you learn anything new about yourself through this activity?
3. What did it feel like to share positive things about yourself with the team? Was it easy? Hard?
4. Did you notice certain things come up more than others? What were they? What are some strengths we have together as a team?
5. How have you used your strengths to help another person, whether a teammate or someone else?
6. What could we accomplish as a team that is greater than any one of us could accomplish alone?

Taking Action:

Ask participants to start thinking about how their strengths could help others more regularly. Check in with team a few practices later and see if they have thought of any additional ways their strengths could be used to help others.

¹⁷ From Search Institute (2021) *The Relationship Builder's Guidebook*. Minneapolis, MN ©Search Institute. All Rights Reserved.

Sparks Wall¹⁸

Team members will identify their deep interests, talents, or activities they love—their **sparks**—and share with the team.

COACH NOTE:

Encourage positive expressions of sparks. It's unlikely (but not impossible) that someone's spark could be a harmful activity (drugs, self-injurious behaviors, etc.). If a participant brings up a spark that could be harmful, follow up after the activity to see if they need support or resources.

Explain: What we're going to do is an exercise to start identifying your own sparks. Sparks are interests or passions that give people great enjoyment and often a sense of purpose. They can be sports, music, dance, art, technology, reading, caring for others, math, science, animals, and much more.

For example, in addition to loving being a coach, another of MY sparks is _____ (coach share some of your own sparks with team as examples).

1. Ask these questions for the team to write down responses to. After each of the following questions, pause for a few moments to give the players time to think and write before moving on to the next question:
 - What are some things you are really interested in?
 - What is an activity you are really good at?
 - If you woke up one morning and were told you could do one activity for as long as you wanted, what activity would it be?
 - When in your life do you feel happiest? What are you doing at those times?
 - Are there times when you lose track of time because you like the activity you are doing so much? What is that activity?
2. Ask team to now look at the answers on their paper and circle the things that they think are their sparks. Be sure to walk around and ask anyone if they need help identifying their sparks.
3. Ask each team member to choose one of their sparks. Without saying anything or letting others see, they should **write that spark on a sticky note or half sheet**. Tell them to try to write in plain handwriting so that other people won't be able to guess who wrote it by the handwriting. Tell participants that they will be sharing their spark on the wall, and that people will guess which one is theirs.
4. Collect the sticky notes (make sure to mix them up) and put them all on a wall, fence, etc., with enough space between each so that all of the team members will be able to read what is written on the notes without too much crowding.
5. Ask team members to go to the wall or fence and read the sparks written on the notes. When the team has had a chance to read all of the notes, come back together as a full group.

¹⁸ From Search Institute (2021) *The Relationship Builder's Guidebook*. Minneapolis, MN ©Search Institute. All Rights Reserved.

6. Take each sticky note off of the wall one by one. As you do, ask the team to guess who wrote the note you are taking down. After they've had a chance to guess who wrote each note, ask the real writer of the note to identify themselves and explain their spark (if time allows).

Reflect

Discuss 1 or more of these questions as a team:

- Did you find anyone else in the group who had a spark in common with you (even if it's not the one you wrote down)?
- Is anyone inspired to learn more about or consider trying someone else's spark?
- Who helped you develop your spark? What did they do?
- Who would be willing to teach others how to do your spark?
- Which spark besides your own would you enjoy doing the most?
- Which spark surprised you the most?
- Which spark do you think would be the most difficult to do?

Balloon Circle¹⁹

Team members collaborate to keep a balloon floating in the air by passing it around, with the option of adding additional challenges.

Let the team know that they will work as a team to keep a balloon afloat in the air. They will have to practice their collaboration and teamwork skills because it is a task that no one person can complete on their own.

If you have a large team, you can split into mini-teams of 8-12 players and make a contest of it!

1. Have participants **stand in a circle**, close enough to one another that if they reach their arms to the side, their hands can touch. Explain that they will start with one balloon that they need to keep in the air. They can bump it up with their hands or other body parts, as long as it doesn't touch the ground. **After one person touches the balloon, that person cannot touch it again until after two other people have touched it first.** Tell participants you will be timing how long they can keep the balloon from hitting the ground.
2. Toss the balloon into the circle and begin timing on a stopwatch, as participants work to keep the balloon in the air. When the balloon hits the ground, stop the stopwatch and tell participants how long they kept the balloon in the air. Using that number as a benchmark, have the group set a goal for how long they want to try to keep the balloon in the air. (If the first try is particularly short, give the group a few tries before setting a goal.)
3. Continue timing the group until they reach their goal. Coach the group on communicating with each other by asking how they plan to involve everyone and meet their goals between each round. If they accomplish their goal quickly, give the group an opportunity to beat their goal or set a more challenging goal for themselves.

If time allows, **consider the following adaptations to make it more challenging:**

- Players may only use certain body parts or lose the option to use certain body parts over time.
- Players must stand on one foot.
- After one person touches the balloon, they must wait until 5 (or more) people touch the balloon before they can touch it again.
- Spread out the circle so the participants are further from one another.
- Players may not speak.
- Add extra balloons so the group needs to keep up to three balloons up at a time. (Make sure they are different colors or marked so that players know which ones they can touch and which they need to wait for others to touch first.)

¹⁹ From Search Institute (2021) *The Relationship Builder's Guidebook*. Minneapolis, MN ©Search Institute. All Rights Reserved.

Reflect

- How did your group work together to accomplish your goal?
- Did everyone contribute equally? If so, how did you make sure that happened? If not, what got in the way?
- How did it feel to have to wait for others to touch the balloon before you could touch it again?
- If you added adaptations: Which challenges were the hardest? Why?
- In life, can you think of times you experienced being excluded or included? How did it feel?
- When we are working on something together as a group in the future, how can we make sure everyone works well together?

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND CHARACTER THROUGH SPORTS

USER GUIDE FOR VIDEO PLAYLIST

WORKSHEETS & RESOURCES

A Resource from Search Institute & P/ATH—Progress Through Athletics

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About P/ATH:

www.pathsports.org

P/ATH (Progress Through Athletics) offers *free content featuring some of the most successful athletes and coaches* across sports. They use their experience to teach us lessons around how to build mindset skills, what goes into great team cultures, how to break out of the boxes we get put in and how the most valuable life lessons we learn in sports can transfer off the field.

P/ATH's long-term goal is not just to position our kids and their teams for success, but to position their generation to build a better world. Think about what our world would look like if everybody asked themselves those same two questions: *How can I be better? How can I help the person next to me be better?*

About Search Institute:

searchinstitute.org

Search Institute is a nonprofit, Minneapolis-based organization with a sixty-plus-year history of collaboration with partners around the world to conduct and apply research that promotes positive youth development and advances equity.

Search Institute's tools build connections that help all young people learn and grow.

Search Institute's team of developmental psychologists, applied research scientists, fellows, scholars and seasoned educators possesses a wealth of experience and expertise in developmental theory, positive youth development, and prevention science, and has conducted positive youth development research, education, and training in more than 3 dozen countries worldwide.

Our team includes research scientists who also are lifelong competitive athletes and long-time coaches of youth sports. Drawing on this unique mixture of experiences, Search Institute's vision for its Youth Development through Sports initiative is that *all* youth, regardless of how they identify themselves, their background, or their current skill levels, are entitled to a sports experience that involves positive relationships with caring adults and peers, and the opportunity to grow in character and contribute to their teams and communities while learning how to perform on and off the playing field at their personal best.

We help coaches, parents, student-athletes, and supportive allies reach that goal by creating a Developmental Relationships and Compete-Learn-Honor culture in youth sports, where winning is enjoyed but where safety and wellness, fun, growth, and playing with great character are the top goals.