

## Coaching Like Holy Nobility

Revelation 1:5-6 "...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us **kings and priests unto God** and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

**A Coach's philosophy of sports is simply an extension of his philosophy of life.** The pressures of competition test our philosophy and also magnify our own strengths and weaknesses. Unless we base our philosophy upon fixed principles, the circumstances in which we find ourselves will determine our reactions. We will react as impulsively as the students that we are teaching and thereby become an excuse rather than the example that we should be. When this happens, coaches and the sport that they teach become a stumbling block for developing youth. The athletic program becomes an avenue for showmanship instead of discipleship. The profanity, disrespect, cocky aggression, and inflated egos of a few near-sighted young people whose claim to fame is that they are good at playing games then taints the school's testimony. Sadly, these influential elements often sow their carnal oats in the classroom that we are trying to reach (while continuing to feed their flesh through our sports program). This unintended and undesired digression all begins with the wrong philosophy of life on the part of leadership!

*WHERE does failure to develop and display a Biblical philosophy of life show up in sports?*

**Unscriptural ambitions:** The lust for scoreboard victories can be addictive, and can callous us in the vital areas of motives and methods. It is so easy for us to perform with the wrong priorities--games and then godliness. Coaches who allow their sport to become a vehicle for players to seek the praise of men at the expense of the school's testimony should

evaluate their purpose for coaching. **If they do not desire and expect their players to perform in a way that "gives others a good opinion of God," then they have a monster and not a ministry.** Referees, parents, and the other team should see in you and your players actions and attitudes that give them the impression that Christian education makes a life-changing impact upon young people. Edify your players who are Christians and evangelize those who are lost by modeling the right ambition. Seek to coach like holy nobility!

**Those who observe you and your team should see that it is possible to be godly and good at playing games.**

**Undisciplined actions:** What are we teaching kids when we allow them to put on their game face and push to the limit the restrictions of a secular rulebook? We wrongly take as the norm some unbiblical actions that flow from hearts that do not have eternity's values in view. In the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16), the Bible states that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. It is travesty that many secularists, out of a love for pure sport, often pursue fair play to a nobler degree than many Christians who routinely mouth I Corinthians 10:31 about glorifying God in all things without putting it in the context of refusing to do anything that offends others (32-33). We Christians would do well to assimilate and instill the principles written in a pamphlet by the French Committee for Fair Play and reprinted in a 1974 issue of the [American Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance](#). "It is noteworthy that, when sport involves competition, a certain attitude of mind should go with it. 'Its practice should be marked by a spirit of truth and honesty, with strict observance of all the rules, *whether written or unwritten*.' As a moral concept, an 'impulse of the

soul,' fair play implies the sincere desire for one's opponent to be on equal terms with oneself and being extremely scrupulous in regards to the means of winning. Fairplay is thus the resolute and persistent refusal of victory at any price. It is an attitude imposing an exacting moral standard for oneself, since it stems from the inward conviction that to win by cheating, by an umpire's error, or by an unfair stroke of fate is not really to win. To sum up: *fairplay is a way of behaving*.' It is an ever-present awareness that the opponent is above all a partner in the games, to whom one is bound by the companionship of sport. It is a form of self-respect shown by: straightforwardness, a spirit of fairness; respect for the opponent, whether winning or losing; respect for the referee and the umpire and a steadfast collaboration with them; sportsmanship without ostentation; a firm and dignified attitude when the opponent or the public does not play fair; modesty in victory, equanimity in defeat. It is a spirit of generosity towards the opponent creating a warm human relationship. **Fairplay thus represents the attitude of mind that not only gives nobility to sport, but is also the condition of its survival in the face of the serious dangers that threaten it.** [More than ever, that applies to Christian school athletics!]

**Unneeded criticism:** Many times, we are so busy "bettering" our peers or "baiting" the officials that we fail to esteem them better than ourselves on the spiritual level. Our speech and our actions under pressure will determine our testimony before the officials, the fans, the parents and the players. The "need" to win has seemingly callused many coaches to the sober warning of Matthew 12:36, 37. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." When the beatitudes command us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us, to bless them who curse us, and to pray for them who spitefully use us, **we cannot justify yelling at the students whom we are disciplining, berating**

**authority figures, or debating an opposing coach for the sake of a game!** "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself." (Eccl.10:12)

**Unprayerful planning:** Our planning and our praying reflect our priorities. We need to go beyond "talking shop" to carefully instilling principles in our players' **heads during practice**. We must then consistently insist that those principles be displayed in our players' **habits during performances**. Most importantly, we must ingrain those principles in our players' **hearts through prayer and personal example**. II Peter 1:15-16 offers these valuable insights: "Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." These things, not Peter--*principles, not a personality*. Is it obvious that you carefully apply principles from the Word of God through your coaching and that you prayerfully focus on "making much of His majesty?" Would to God that Hebrews 11:4 could be the testimony of every Christian coach--"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Unfortunately, "Cain-like" coaches are a dime a dozen--religious, but not righteous. Coach, for what will *your* players remember *you* most--games or godliness?

The essence of **FINISHING** necessitates that we do not ignore the scoreboard; however, we must pursue our best effort with our philosophy squarely intact like frontlets before our eyes. Keeping a God-honoring balance between the spiritual and the physical necessitates a Kingdom-of-God mindset that seeks to display a Finishing spirit through your conduct and to develop Finishers through your coaching for the glory of God and the eternal good of others.

## Beyond Garland to Gold: Molding *FINISHERS*

2 Tim. 4:7 "I have fought a good fight, **I have finished my course**, I have kept the faith."

**F**air play: I will consistently demonstrate trustworthiness as an ambassador of Christ by promoting the spirit of fair play as I fulfill my responsibilities as a coach. Romans 14:11-19

**I**ntegrity: I will be guided by the ethical code of imitating Christ as I adhere to the guidelines of the NCCSA in spirit and in fact. II Timothy 2:3-5

**N**ever-quit attitude: I will press towards God's goal of Christ likeness, no matter what the prospect of personal pain or profit. (Romans 8:28, 29; Hebrews 12:1,2)

**I**nstrument mentality: I will look for opportunities to promote the gospel and growth through my attitude, speech and actions. I Cor. 10:31-33

**S**elf-Control: I will not be impatient, angry or judgmental towards the shortcomings of others involved in the game. Prov.16:32; Matthew 12:36

**H**ustle: I will pursue personal excellence as unto the Lord in whatever I do. Philippians 3:13, 14

**E**xcellence: I will know and teach the rules, tactics and techniques of my sport in a commendable manner. Colossians 3:17

**R**everence: I will speak and act like holy nobility with the dignity and gratitude befitting a Kingdom-of-God mindset. I Peter 2:9; 4:11

**S**ervant leadership: I will seek to demonstrate a me-serve-you and not a you-serve-me approach to my ministry. Philippians 2:4-8

Your **Ministry** of Coaching in the

# North Carolina Christian School Association

**"We who coach have great influence on the lives of all who come under our supervision. It is essential that we regard this as a sacred trust and set the example that we know is right. We must try to prevent the pressures for winning scores from causing us to swerve from moral principles."**

**John Wooden**

**Bob LaTour**  
NCCSA Athletic Commissioner