



ENGAGING COACHES

Common Challenges and Solutions to Engaging Coaches

⚠ CHALLENGE: Coaches say, “I don’t have the time to work on Life of an Athlete.”

✓ PROPOSED SOLUTION:

- Remind coaches that a small time investment will add value to a team.

Examples of these messages include:

- Making leadership a priority can have positive impacts on team performance. Leadership provides structure to the team and a plan for success.²
- Building strong, positive relationships will help solidify competitive results.
- Coaches have found that when they are able to work with their teams to deal with small issues, they end up preventing larger issues down the line, which actually saves time for them.

⚠ CHALLENGE: Coaches say, “I already have a great system in place.”

✓ PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

Ask coaches some questions to get them thinking about how they define a great system such as:

- What is the most important thing that youth can gain by playing in sports?
- Are you looking at anything beyond wins and losses?
- What benchmarks are in place to help your athletes with their team goals?
- Are there expectations that consider lifestyle choices and team dynamics?

Remind coaches that in education-based athletics, we’re obligated to provide skills that will help our student athletes become productive members of society, not just focus on the X’s and O’s. Years later, those student athletes will look back on the relationships they formed and lessons they learned about life, not just the games they won.

⚠ CHALLENGE: Coaches say, “I find that substance misuse isn’t a problem until it surfaces.”

✓ PROPOSED SOLUTION:

- Have the coaches ask themselves:
 - Do other teammates know about issues that haven’t surfaced?
 - Does the way teammates behave impacts team morale and team unity?
 - Can other teams reach their full potential if they aren’t communicating?

⚠ CHALLENGE: Coaches say, “I feel Life of an Athlete lacks substance, it’s all over the place.”

✓ PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

Although there are many components to LoA, it is important to ensure that it’s clear the role of the coach is focused on the following:

- **Team dynamics:** from rookies to veterans, starters to back up players; every member of the team is important. Understanding the dynamics of the team will make for a stronger unit.
- **Relationships:** regardless of what role they’re playing on the team, each and every kid needs to feel that the coach cares about them personally. Once a coach shows the student athletes that they care about them on and off the field, that they’re part of the team, then they’ll show their full potential.
- **Team goals:** teams almost always identify state championship as their goal, coaches should work to ensure team goals are attainable and have benchmarks, the season has to be worth something even if a team is out of contention.
- **Lifestyle choices:** coaches willing to discuss and address lifestyle choices show the team they are willing to tackle the tough issues to see the team reach their full potential.

²Lewis, T. F. (2008). An explanatory model of student-athlete drinking: the role of team leadership, social norms, perceptions of risk, and coaches’ attitudes toward alcohol consumption. *College Student Journal*, 42, 818–831.