

**PLAY LIKE  
A CHAMPION  
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

## Champion Coach Note

Educating and Forming Champion Coaches

### What Are Your Core Values?



With two national championships in the past four seasons, the Villanova men's basketball program is one of the very best in the nation. So what's the key to their success? As [Head Coach Jay Wright details in the video above](#), the team has established a set of **core values** that coaches and student-athletes adhere to both on and off the court. For Villanova, those values make up the *Villanova Triangle*, a visual that features prominently in the team's gym and embodies the team's philosophy. As Wright notes, these are also the measures by which the team evaluates itself after each game, win or lose.

Leadership guru Patrick Lencioni defines core values as "the deeply engrained principles that guide all of a (group's) actions." Establishing these values are critical for athletic teams at every level. As the Villanova example above demonstrates, these can be simple: focused on principles such as the effort or attitude put forth by the team, the way that athletes treat teammates and opponents, or the role that faith plays on a team. Coaches should help to develop these values, but as teams get older it's important that team members are also involved in the process of naming these values and assuring that everyone upholds them.

**What are your team's core values?** If you don't have these outlined, take a moment to consider them now and discuss this at your next practice. Once established, return to these values frequently and use them to evaluate your performance following practices and games. Doing so will develop an identity within your team and create practices that will help your athletes and team to grow into *Champions*.

Learn more about Jay Wright's core values in his book [Attitude: Develop a Winning Mindset on and off the Court](#).

### GROW: The Core Values of a *Champion*



Champions that provide an excellent team map to establishing core values on your team. Rooted in the Cardinal Virtues, the GROW Approach emphasizes the importance of **Goals + Relationships + Ownership** in building a **Winning** team. Each of these elements contains keys to helping athletes grow individually and collectively.

Recall that every team should set physical, mental and moral **Goals** that help them to develop and maintain skills and *character* during practices and games. Teams should also emphasize the importance of positive **Relationships**, treating teammates, coaches, opponents and officials with dignity and respect. By giving **Ownership** to athletes, coaches allow them to become invested in the team and grow as leaders. Together, these components lead to a true understanding of **Winning**; recognizing that while winning is certainly fun, the real joy of sport can be found in competition.

Coaches, review the GROW Approach and consider how you can improve in each of these areas on your team, or incorporate these elements into your team's core values. By following this simple equation, your athletes will be well on their way to becoming *Champions* in sport and in life.

**Goals + Relationships + Ownership = Winning**

## A Prayer for Teams

*On September 8th, the Catholic Church celebrates the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Born without sin and destined to become the Mother of God, Mary is both a model for us to follow and a powerful intercessor for us. As coaches, we can entrust our teams to her and call upon her frequently in our journey.*



Holy Mother of God, we ask for your prayers during this practice that you might help lead us closer to God through our participation on this team. We ask that you keep us safe this week and lift up all the prayers we hold in our hearts to God, that we may come to know Him more fully through you. May our practice and play honor you so that it may be worthy of Christ. Amen.

*Find more than 300 prayers for coaches, athletes, teams and sports parents by visiting Play Like a Champion's Prayer Resources at [www.playlikeachampion.org/prayer](http://www.playlikeachampion.org/prayer).*

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