
Teaching the Code for Living

Series H: True Stories

Classroom Curriculum

Lessons designed to accompany *The Code for Living*, teaching classroom skills through sports



***Winning More
Than The Game***

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE
CONTACT:

Tara Riley
Director of Education
Email: <mailto:triley@abw.org>
P.O. Box 99007
Seattle, WA 98139-0007

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Introduction

These sessions have been designed for use by coaches, parents and athletes for several purposes:

1. To teach the values that stand behind the Code for Living thereby building the character of the athletes.
2. To help team members get to know each other and thereby create stronger bonds to one another and greater commitment to the team
3. To provide coaches with tools for teaching the values the coach holds.

To gauge whether your team likes an activity or whether the activity is fulfilling the desired objectives, you can carefully watch the players and ask some specific questions. Informal observations over an extended period of time provide some very valuable information. As a successful coach you should be asking yourself:

1. Do the participants understand the story?
2. Is the challenge appropriate and is everyone involved?
3. Are they having fun?
4. Are they able to make the connection between the story and themselves? The team?

As the coach, remember that values make our life safe and workable. Understanding values will help students manage their time as well as provide direction in their life. Solid values are the basic stepping stones to happiness and success.

Finally, we believe it is important to provide opportunities for character development in addition to skill development and competition. By participating in exercises such as these, players learn about themselves and one another. This builds individual self-confidence and team unity.

***I will develop my skills to the best of my ability
and give my best effort in practice and competition.***

Lesson 1 Jim Abbott

Learning

Goal

To reinforce the Code for Living through the examples set by elite athletes.

Activity

1) Share and discuss the following story with your team:

Admittedly nervous, Jim Abbott came to the California Angels' spring training camp in Mesa, Arizona, in March 1989. He was only 21 years old, straight out of college. And he had never faced big-league hitters before. But he welcomed the challenge because life for him has always been an extra challenge. Abbott was born without a right hand. As a child growing up in Flint, Michigan, Abbott learned to play baseball the same way many kids do: playing catch with his father in the backyard. Yet kids can be cruel. Many made jokes about his birth defect, calling him nicknames like "Stub." But the jokes and nicknames didn't last long. Abbott became the best in the neighborhood - in all sports. "He was going to show everybody," said Mike Abbott, his father. Mr. Abbott watched his son spend countless hours throwing a ball against a brick wall and then mastering a technique to throw and catch. When he threw, the stub of his right hand would be stuck in the pocket of his glove. Then he'd move his left hand into the glove and make the catch. Next, tucking the glove under his right arm and, with the ball in his left hand, he'd be ready to throw again.

Jim's athletic spirit and left arm developed quickly. In his debut as a high-school quarterback at Flint Central, he threw four touchdown passes and led his team to the state semifinals. But baseball was his favorite sport. Jim continued to work at overcoming his handicap. He taught himself to hit, gripping the bat with his left hand and steadying it with his right forearm. He batted .427 in his senior year. And his pitching motion and glove switching became fluid, almost like a magician's sleight of hand. Abbott attended the University of Michigan, where he won 26 games and lost only eight in three seasons. Then he pitched the U.S. team to the baseball gold medal at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea. For his performances in '88, he received the Sullivan Award as the nation's most outstanding amateur athlete.

But the Angels' selection of Abbott as the eighth choice in the draft raised many eyebrows. People said politely that they admired Abbott's courage, but a one-handed pitcher could never survive against major league competition. "I never thought of it as a handicap," Abbott said. "If people wouldn't keep reminding me, I'd never think about it." In 1989, he answered all the naysayers. The promising southpaw became a regular member of the Angels' starting rotation and won 12 games. He lost 12. He posted a 3.92 earned-run average, largely with a two-pitch repertoire - a fastball that gets up to 93 miles an hour and a slider. "It was a tough year. It was a long year. But it was a great year," Abbott said of his first major-league season, in which he became the most closely watched and celebrated rookie in many years.

(Written by Phyllis and Zander Hollander in *More Amazing But True Sports Stories*, 1990)

**Coaching
Points**

1) "A dream is something you think about. A goal is something you are willing to work toward achieving. A dream becomes a goal when you start to make it come true." (Kramer, 1992)

2) Talk about setting realistic short-term goals as it is important that players not only learn how to set goals, but to learn the positive feeling they receive from meeting those goals.

3) Point out the need for not only performance-based goals, but lifestyle goals, which lead you through life's journey.

Lesson 2 Boris Onischenko

Learning

Goal

To reinforce the Code for Living through the examples set by elite athletes.

Activity

1) Share and discuss the following story with your team:

The Soviet Union's Boris Onischenko had been a silver medallist in the modern pentathlon at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, West Germany. He was a leading contender for honors again at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal.

Dueling in the fencing event, his opponent, England's Jeremy Fox, jumped back without being touched. But Onischenko's epee (sword) registered a hit. Fox protested and following an investigation, Onischenko was disqualified. The officials detected a bugging device in his epee - a button hidden in the handle which, when pressed, set off the electronic signal indicating a hit.

As a result, Onischenko not only lost his chance for a medal, he came home to a cool reception in the former USSR. He was given a lesser job and he was ousted from the athletic clubs where he'd trained over the years.

(Written by Phyllis and Zander Hollander in *More Amazing But True Sports Stories*, 1990)

Coaching

Points

- 1) Try to teach your players that the rules of their sport may actually assist them in becoming better athletes.
- 2) Point out specific rules that relate to sportsmanship.
- 3) Discuss the need for rules to avoid chaos.

I will respect the dignity of every human being, and will not be abusive or dehumanizing of another either as an athlete or as a fan.

Lesson 3 Grant Hill

Learning

Goal To reinforce the Code for Living through the examples set by elite athletes.

Activity 1) Share and discuss the following passage by Grant Hill with your team:

For the most part, I have a good rapport with people in my profession. I get along with teammates, most opponents, and fans. The formula is simple. Treat others with the respect you would like for yourself. Reporters have a job to do, so I set aside time for them. A coach, like your boss, needs to be heard and heeded.

When I dunk, I don't point my finger, or get in someone's face. I guess this makes me different from a lot of guys in the NBA, but I've never derived pleasure from making someone else feel bad or angry. That probably goes back to wanting to be everyone's friend. When the game's over, I don't want guys on the other team to hate me. Don't get me wrong. I enjoy beating a guy to the ball, or dunking on him. And I'm excited when I do. I may even pump my fist. That's a celebration of my success, and my team's success. This game is about competition, match-ups, and winning all the little wars. When I step out there, I want badly to beat you. But I don't have to put you down to do it. Promoting myself at the expense of others is the same as pointing a finger after a dunk. That's not me, and it's not what this book is about. I'd like to see respect come back in vogue in the NBA, but the only way to do that is through example. Try to tell someone to do something, the knee-jerk reaction will likely be, "Who does he think he is?" Lead by example, and you've got a better chance. You can be a competitor, a gamer, a winner, and you can show some respect too.

(Written by Grant Hill in *Change the Game*, 1996)

Coaching Points

- 1) Discuss how respect for opposing players will better prepare you for a game.
- 2) Detail the importance of good sportsmanship and how that relates to a player's development as an athlete. For example, two players of equal ability are vying for a college scholarship – what could make a coach choose one player over the other?
- 3) What is the difference between "Do to others as you would have them do to you," and "Do not do to others what you would not like them to do to you?"

I will place team goals ahead of personal goals.

Lesson 4 Stevin “Hedake” Smith

Learning

Goal

To reinforce the Code for Living through the examples set by elite athletes.

Activity

1) Share and discuss the following passage by Stevin Smith with your team:

It should have been the greatest night of my life-June 29,1994, the night I was expecting to be drafted by one of the 27 NBA teams. I had believed that I would be a late first-round or early second-round pick. I know some of the neighbors were wondering if my not getting drafted had anything to do with rumors that I had helped a gambling ring by shaving points during my senior year at Arizona State. I had denied knowing anything about point shaving, and everyone who knew how competitive I was believed me. Everyone, it seemed, but the NBA. Whether league officials knew it for sure or not, they were right. I'd done it. I'd been at the center of the biggest point-shaving scandal, in terms of money wagered, in college sports history. Now I was paying the price.

Until then I'd had an amazing life in basketball. I'd been one of the nation's top-rated high school point guards in 1990 and had been recruited by nearly every major college. I chose Arizona State and I immediately started playing quality minutes for the Sun Devils. After my junior year I was chosen for the U.S. World University Games Team, of which I was a captain and which I led in scoring in the gold medal round, even though I'm only 5' 11". I entered my senior season as the leading returning scorer in the Pac-10. Then, in November, I started making bad decisions. My gambling started when a friend of mine told me he was getting ready to bet that the Arizona Cardinals would beat the spread in their game with the Dallas Cowboys. Being from Dallas, I argued with him for a while. Then he challenged me: 'If you're so sure, why don't you put your money where your mouth is?' He told me he was calling his bookie and could add a bet from me. I jumped in for \$100. Within a matter of weeks I was betting on anything I could.

I had a monthly scholarship check coming that I was supposed to use to pay the rent on my off-campus apartment, but it would have taken almost the entire check to pay off my debt. So I decided to try and talk my way out of having to make the payment when I met with the bookie. He was a student from New York, Benny Silman, and you'd never pick him out in a crowd as a bookmaker. "No problem," Benny told me after I explained my situation. In December, Benny casually told me he had a way for me to erase my debt: All I had to do was make sure we didn't win by too many points. He made it clear he didn't want me to lose any games, just make sure we didn't cover the point spread. He said he'd wipe out my debt, and we could make some money together. He made it sound simple. He never used the term point shaving, never made it seem like it was dangerous. I said I'd do it. He told me he'd wait until the right game, that he wanted the circumstances to be perfect. Because I wasn't that obvious, no one suspected me. People who looked at the tape couldn't see any sign that either of us was trying to hurt our team. There were a lot of stories in the newspapers the next few days about suspicions that the Washington game had been fixed. Benny called me a day or two after the game and said it was "getting hot" in Phoenix. He was leaving town for a while and reminded me not to say anything'. That was the last time I spoke to him.

I don't know if it was the respect I'd earned as Arizona State's No. 1 all-time scorer or as a team captain, but nobody came to me and asked if I was involved- not Coach Frieder, not the FBI. As the draft neared, it seemed that everything had blown over. Maybe it wasn't that big of a deal. But when I didn't get drafted, I knew suspicion had to be the reason. No matter what happens in my sentencing, however, I pay for my crime every day. When I miss the shot at the end of a pickup game, friends joke that I was fixing. I know they're being funny, but it hurts. Where once I was the man at Arizona State, I can't even go back to campus without hiding my head. I'm ashamed. I'm embarrassed. I'm sorry.

(Written by Stevin Smith for *Sports Illustrated*, 1998)

Coaching Points

- 1) "Team sports, such as soccer, help to teach a child and young person how to work with others and sacrifice self-promotion for the sake of the team's needs." (Barnes, 1997)
- 2) "Teams break when they don't have a goal or the goals aren't clearly defined by the leaders. Goals have to be firmly entrenched, otherwise people begin to operate as individual entrepreneurs in a system that really needs cooperative work." (Dr. Lew Richfield)

I will be a positive influence on the relationships on the team.

Lesson 5 Pavol Demitra

Learning Goal

To reinforce the Code for Living through the examples set by elite athletes.

Activity

1) Share and discuss the following story with your team:

During the final regular season game, St. Louis Blues hockey player Pavol Demitra carried the puck into the Los Angeles Kings zone. L.A., trailing 3-2, had pulled its goalie, and Demitra found himself with the puck in front of an open net. Demitra needed one goal to reach 90 for the season, thus triggering a \$500,000 incentive clause in his contract. But he knew that his teammate Scott Young, was one goal short of the 25 he needed to earn a \$300,000 bonus. So Demitra passed up the open net and slid the puck to Young, whose shot was blocked by a L.A. Kings defenseman as time ran out. Asked how he could pass up a certain half-million dollars, Demitra said, "Scott needed a goal."

(Written by *Sports Illustrated*)

Coaching Points

- 1) George Bernard Shaw said, "What really flatters a [person] is that you think [them] worth flattering."
- 2) A player who is a positive influence on his/her teammates earns respect.

I will follow the team rules established by the coach.

Lesson 6 Michael Jordan

Learning

Goal

To reinforce the Code for Living through the examples set by elite athletes.

Activity

1) Share and discuss the following passage by Michael Jordan with your team:

On the Bulls, we had two guys with distinct abilities in Bill Cartwright and John Paxson. And we found a way to use those talents within the framework of our team. It's the same with workers on the lower end of the corporate ladder. Managers, just like basketball coaches, have to find a way to utilize those individual talents, in the best interests of the company. When we started winning championships, there was an understanding among all twelve players about what our roles were. We knew our responsibilities and we knew our capabilities. We knew, for example, that we wanted to go to Bill early and try to get him into the flow of the game. We knew that if John hit his first shot it would open things up for Scottie Pippen, B.J. Armstrong, and myself. Those were the kinds of things we had to understand and accept if we were going to win championships. It took us a period of time to understand that. In our society sometimes it's hard to come to grips with filling a role instead of trying to be a superstar. There is a tendency to ignore or fail to respect all the parts that make the whole thing possible. And that's why we were able to beat more talented teams. There are plenty of teams in every sport that have great players and never win titles. Most of the time, those players aren't willing to sacrifice for the greater good of the team. The funny thing is, in the end, their unwillingness to sacrifice only makes individual goals more difficult to achieve.

The one thing I was taught at North Carolina, and one thing that I believe to the fullest, is that if you think and achieve as a team, the individual accolades will take care of themselves. Me? I'd rather have five guys with less talent who are willing to come together as a team than five guys who consider themselves stars and aren't willing to sacrifice. Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence win championships.

(Written by Michael Jordan, *I Can't Accept Not Trying*, 1994)

**Coaching
Points**

- 1) It is important to always help your players understand the rules in order for them to be motivated to follow them out of a sense of responsibility to self and others.
- 2) There may be additional rules that you wish to institute that the team does not create. Be sure to share those with the team before establishing the consequences so that they may feel some ownership of the rule.
- 3) It is important for the players to have ownership in team rules. However, each coach will have to, at times, make rules independent of the wishes of the players. Discuss.

***I will display caring and honorable behavior off the field
and be a positive influence in my community and world.***

Lesson 7 The Chinese National Basketball Team

Learning

Goal

To reinforce the Code for Living through the examples set by elite athletes.

Activity

1) Share and discuss the following story with your team:

It was a breakthrough when the national basketball team of the People's Republic of China agreed to a 1978 tour of the U.S. following the World Games in Argentina. The chief object of curiosity for Americans was China's 7'1/2-foot center, Mu Tieh-chu, who became known as "The Great Wall of China." His big moment off the court came when he met former NBA superstar Wilt Chamberlain in Los Angeles and got his autograph.

On the court, China lost its first three games to UCLA, San Francisco and Wake Forest. Then, Mu Tieh-chu's team surprised Georgetown, 75-69, and headed for the final game of the tour against Rutgers at New York's Madison Square Garden. It took place on November 18, 1978, and the Chinese made their everlasting mark on the American sports scene. The score was tied at 84-all when the buzzer sounded, ending regulation time. While an announcement was made that the traditional five-minute overtime period would begin shortly, the Chinese players gathered their gear and walked off the floor. Tsien Chen-hai, the Chinese coach, offered a simple explanation: "Why should we keep on playing? We're here on a friendly visit and winning or losing is not important."

(Written by Phyllis and Zander Hollander in *More Amazing But True Sports Stories*, 1990)

Coaching Points

1) "Children who are loved and disciplined consistently, who feel free to express themselves and to try out new things, and children who see models of compassion around them are more likely to become independent, to make friends easily, to express compassion and empathy for strangers, and to feel comfortable in the world outside their families." (Bullard, 1996)

2) No matter what level of sport you coach, there are always younger players looking up to older players.

***I will give of my time, skills, and money as I am able
for the betterment of my community and world.***

Lesson 8 Willie Bloomquist

Learning

Goal

To reinforce the Code for Living through the examples set by elite athletes.

Activity

1) Share and discuss the following story with your team:

While most students spent their summer lounging by a pool or working at the local mall, Arizona State baseball player Willie Bloomquist was busy working on his swing with the USA National Baseball Team. "It's a total different experience than playing for college because you're there representing your country," says Bloomquist. "You're playing for the red, white and blue. It was an awesome experience being able to represent my country. When you put on a USA uniform, it's something special.

Playing in Nicaragua was a memorable first-time experience for Bloomquist. "Obviously the biggest difference was the living conditions and the playing fields," notes Bloomquist. "It made me thankful for what we have here." While in Nicaragua, the team "adopted" a young man named Carlos as their bat boy for the qualifier. "At our first practice, we were hitting balls out of the park and these little kids were grabbing the balls and trying to run off with them" Bloomquist says. "Carlos was out there stopping them. We thought that was kind of cool he was going out there and preventing them from taking our baseballs. He never asked for anything from us, he just picked up all the bats and did his job." Carlos showed up early before each game for the entire two weeks and the squad was impressed with his dedication. For his efforts, the team gave him a hat and a shirt to wear. "He was on cloud nine," Bloomquist says with a smile. "He would show it to people in the stands." Towards the end of the trip, a couple of players got together and decided to do something nice for Carlos. Everybody on the team chipped in around \$10 to show their appreciation for all of his hard work. "It added up to over \$150 and at the end of the trip we gathered in a big circle and Alex Santos (Univ. of Miami) translated for us," says Bloomquist. "He told Carlos that the money was for him to show our appreciation for all he had done and we hoped that he and his family could use this and wished him good fortune. We counted out the money and his eyes just got huge. He pulls out an old worn handkerchief and started crying. It felt really cool giving back like that. That's so much money to them and so little to us, just to help out felt really great."

"Willie is an unselfish player - a total team guy," says ASU head coach Pat Murphy. "He plays the game the way I believe it was meant to be played. I've only been coaching for 15 years, but in that time I have never met a finer young man." To illustrate Bloomquist's character, the following semester he relinquished his scholarship to allow a teammate to return on scholarship. "I said, 'Coach if you need the money take it,'" says Bloomquist. "I talked to my parents and they said they were in a financial situation where they could handle my tuition and stuff. If it's helping out someone in need than it's worth it." Coach Murphy was not surprised by Bloomquist's generosity. "Willie and his family are such class people it didn't surprise me," Murphy says. "It's unusual in today's world where everybody's got their palm up wondering what you can do for them, Willie's the direct opposite - he's got his palm down."

(Written by Aimee Dombroski, Arizona State Baseball website – www.thesundevils.com, 1999)

Coaching Points

- 1) Compassion is sorrow for the sufferings or trouble of another or others, accompanied by an urge to help.
- 2) You may want to establish an action plan of community involvement for the entire team or individuals.

Sample Teaching Planner for Series I

Week #	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	10-minutes Jim Abbott	10-minutes Boris Onischenko	10-minutes Grant Hill	10-minutes Stevin Smith	10-minutes Pavol Demitra
2	10-minutes Michael Jordan	10-minutes Chinese Basketball	10-minutes Willie Bloomquist		

Recognition of Participation

Athletes for a Better World has Certificates of Participation for your athletes available upon request. ABW recognizes the individual efforts athletes and coaches make to live by the Code for Living.