

Parents' Playbook

One question that I get more than others from parents is: "Coach, what can we do to help?" There is no easy answer for that question. But when we agree that all of us want this experience to be positive for the boys, it is useful for parents to have a playbook that sets out some goals and advice for navigating the football season.

In the following pages I have given you a few ideas that I believe will help you make this the very best possible experience for your sons. The first section is a list of our player guidelines, which we have posted in our locker rooms for our team. It is a compilation of goals and rules that we will live by.

The second section contains some parenting guidelines I have picked up over the years. I believe that if they are followed, the guidelines will allow both you and your sons the best chance of sharing this experience. I can promise you that over the course of a season there will be times that we shed tears and jump for joy, often in the same evening. I have come to the conclusion after 30 years of coaching boys, including my own son, that this experience is much more emotionally difficult for parents than it is for the players. As you will see in the section that describes the parts of the team, we have a saying: "Referees referee, coaches coach, players play." This is our attempt to say "Parents parent." Good Luck!!!

Bobby Alston
MUS Head Football Coach

MUS Football Players' Guide **GOALS**

TEAM GOALS

*Go big team down the field
And honor bring to the red and blue
Our team will never yield
Our men forever will be true
Whether we lose or win
A greater team you you'll never see
We'll show our might again
For Memphis University
Ready to fight again
For MUS and victory*

William R. Hatchett, Charles Mosby

Good Better Best,
Let it never rest
Till our Good is Better
And our Better Best

Every Way – Every Play – Every Day

Great Effort
Great Execution
Great Endurance
Great Enthusiasm

You may be better than the rest, but you are not a success until you have made the effort to become the best you can be. — John Wooden

“Great achievement is usually born of great sacrifice, and is never the result of selfishness.”

GOALS

INDIVIDUAL GOALS

1. Believe in TEAMWORK.

Matthew 23:11-12

“He who is greatest among you shall be your servant; whoever exalts himself will be humbled; and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (RSV)

*“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. One thing I believe to the fullest is that if you think and achieve as a team, the individual accolades will take care of themselves. **Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.**”*

Michael Jordan

2. Believe in SACRIFICE

“More than that we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us...”

Romans 5:3-5

“Football is a great deal like life in that it teaches that work, sacrifice, perseverance, competitive drive, selflessness and respect for authority is the price that each and every one of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile.”

Vince Lombardi

3. Believe in DISCIPLINE

There are many important areas in your life: Faith, Family, Job (school), and Friends, and Football. Discipline allows you to balance all of your interest.

“The pain of discipline is never as bad or difficult as the pain of regret”

Frank Lenti

“Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment.”

GOALS

4. Believe in the POWER OF PREPARATION.

"He who fails to plan, plans to fail".

*"Setting a goal is not the main thing. It is **deciding how you will go** about achieving it and **staying** with that plan." - Tom Landry*

5. Believe in the PURSUIT of EXCELLENCE

Whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your might
Ecclesiastes 9:10

"Far better it is to dare mighty things to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered with failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory or defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt

"Life is not tried it is merely survived if you're standing outside the fire"
Garth Brooks

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.
Aristotle

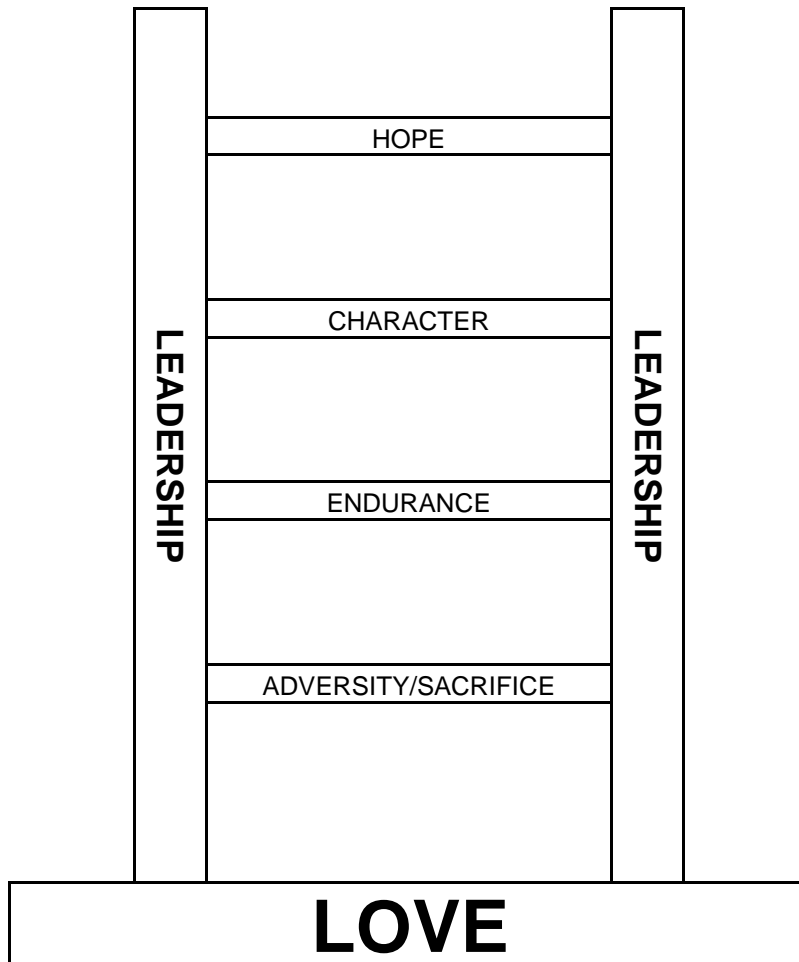
All excellence demands discipline and tenacity of purpose
John Gardner

When you discover what you will be in your life, set out to do it as if God Almighty called you at this particular moment in history to do it. Don't just set out to do a good job. Set out to do such a good job that the living, the dead or the unborn couldn't do it any better. If it falls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo painted pictures, sweep streets like Beethoven composed music, sweep streets like Leontyne Price sings before the Metropolitan Opera. Sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry. Sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will have to pause and say: 'Here lived a great street sweeper who swept his job well.' If you can't be a pine at the top of the hill, be a shrub in the valley. But be the best little shrub on the side of the hill. Be a bush if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a highway, just be a trail. If you can't be a sun, be a star. For it isn't by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

CHAMPIONS LADDER:

The climb to the top is very difficult. It starts with anchoring the ladder in a strong base. The best base is love; love of the game and love of your team. Then the rails must be strong and sturdy composed of the positive leadership provided by all of the seniors. Then we must all remember to take one step at a time. Trying to skip a step only leads to a big fall.



THE PARTS OF A TEAM

PLAYERS PLAY COACHES COACH REFEREES REFEREE

For any organization, from a family to FEDEX, to be successful it is imperative that each person has an established role in that group and does his best to fulfill that role. A person cannot focus on his assignment if he is also trying to do another person's job. We can only perform at our best when we are totally focused on our current assignment.

REFEREES REFEREE

The rules of the game establish the officials in charge of interpreting and enforcing the rules. When coaches or players try to get involved in arguing with officials it is always to the detriment of their team. Do the officials make mistakes? Of course, they are human beings. But their mistakes rarely determine the outcome of a game and are never as costly as the mistakes made by coaches and players. The officials are neither our friends nor our enemies. If something is occurring during the game that requires attention from the officials that information should come from the Head Coach.

COACHES COACH

Our coaches should be excellent teachers of fundamentals, evaluators of ability, and trustworthy mentors. Coaches must make the hard decisions in two critical areas: what are we best able to do and who is best to do it. They are expected to make those decisions with a TEAM First attitude. Mentors are defined as wise and trusted counselors and that relationship should be there for all of the players they coach regardless of their ability.

PLAYERS PLAY

MUS Football is open to all students who wish to be on the team. Membership on the team does not mean playing time on the field. Playing time is earned by performance as judged by the coaches. Membership on the team is a privilege not a right. Boys should seek to be members of the team if they love to play football and enjoy their teammates. Players are able to perform at their best when they trust their coaches and teammates. Performance suffers when players attempt to referee or coach. Players will get the most out of the experience when they selflessly contribute to the team. Every team needs playmakers, some of which may be on the field on a Friday night, in the locker room as a valued teammate, on the practice field as a key scout team member, or in the classroom promoting a positive image of the team. Another way of saying this is asking each player to use all of their God given gifts to promote the welfare of their teammates

HOW TO WIN

Is winning important? Look at our goals and there is no mention of winning. Does that mean that the score does not matter? **NO!** Winning is always important but maybe not for the reasons that you expect. Winning is not important because it shows some false superiority over our opponent. It is not important if only used to boast or brag. It is important because it best demonstrates that we are achieving our goals. Winning is a byproduct. Each game is an exam that tests whether we have done our work for that week. **WINNING IS IMPORTANT.**

We divide our opponents into 3 categories:

1. Games we should win
2. Games that are a toss-up
3. Games we are the underdog

The coaches will tell you each week what category our opponent falls in. Listen to your coaches, not the media or our fans. Remember this; We do not play a game that we cannot lose and we never play a team that we cannot defeat.

Games we should win: One of our goals is to always respect our opponent. That is the first key in these type games. Secondly we must weather the opening storm. The underdog is always more emotional and will play above their heads for a time. Finally, put away the game as soon as possible. The longer the underdog is in the game, the more confidence they gain and the more dangerous they become.

Games that are a toss-up: When playing these games the winner is always the team that makes the fewest mistakes. The team that has to work the hardest to score will usually lose. Big plays will determine the outcome. These games require that someone become a "hero". It often is not the so called "stars" of the team that become the "heroes" but the "stars" must always perform well in these games.

Games that we are the underdog: The first and most important key to winning as an underdog is to develop and implement a plan that everyone believes gives us an opportunity to win. Secondly everyone must raise himself to another level and sustain it for an entire game. Finally we must take advantage of any and every scoring opportunity.

Even when following these guidelines we must realize that there is a certain amount of luck, fate or whatever you like to call it involved in a game. Crazy things will happen. We can reduce the impact of the crazy things by proper preparation and perfecting the fundamentals.

PLAYING TIME

RULE 1: Playing time is determined by performance as assessed by the coaches

We compete to win the games. Coaches will play the players that give us the best chance to gain the victory. They arrive at that decision based on their assessment of previous performance of all the players. To play in the games (when it matters) you need to be the best player (in the opinion of the coaches) at what we do. Playing time is not a reflection of whether the coaches like you as a person or how “good” a person you are morally. We will not be influenced in either direction by your parents and friends. That goes both ways, so do not worry if you have nutty parents. We will play the players who are best able to accomplish the plans the coaches feel give us the best chance to win.

RULE 2: In cases of ties in performance the edge will go the older player

If two players are pretty even we will play the older player the most. MUS values experience and seniority. Those who have invested the most win the ties but only the ties. If the younger player is better he will play more.

RULE 3: Hard work can beat talent that does not work hard

While performance is primarily a function of talent and talent is primarily a function of God’s gift to you at birth, do not believe that talent alone will mean superior performance. Execution of assignments and fundamentals allows the less talented to outperform the more talented. But remember the reverse is also true. Hard work alone does not mean you can outperform a more talented player.

RULE 4: Always be prepared; you never know when your opportunity will arrive

We film almost every practice and game. Your chance to prove your ability to perform may come at any time so always be ready and willing. If you feel your performance has been overlooked go to your coach and discuss it with him. For most players their first chances come when they play as scout team members. Those mean more to coaches than what you may do in a 9th grade or JV game because it is against better players.

RULE 5: Your value to the team is not determined by your playing time

Do not fall into the trap of letting playing time be the measure of your value to the team. If we wanted to do that we would cut it down to where we only had about 45 guys on the team. Your value might be that your practice habits force the better player to practice harder making him better in the game. Your value may be your ability to be a positive teammate in the locker room. You have control of your attitude and can find a way to make a positive contribution. Many times friends and family fail to understand what we are striving for as a team. They want to judge everything by how much someone plays, how many times they get the ball or make tackles etc. This is not what MUS Football is about.

TEAM RULES

Any team or group must have standards to which it's members are held accountable. Our team has one rule: **DO RIGHT**. When we have violations of this rule we will deal with each one individually. Below are a few key areas where the **DO RIGHT** rule is applied.

1. ATTENDANCE:

You are expected to be at every practice and meeting. If you are not able to attend you are expected to call the coaches in advance and have your absence approved on the front end. An unexcused absence shows a lack of respect for you coaches and teammates.

2. LOCKER ROOM:

The locker room is one of the most important areas for the development of discipline and teamwork. The true health of any team can be measured by spending just a few moments in the locker room. You are expected to keep you locker area clean and neat out of respect for those around you. You are also expected to respect the property of others. Any prank in which the person who is “pranked” does not laugh is not funny for any of us.

3. EQUIPMENT:

MUS has provided you with outstanding equipment. We expect you to take care of your equipment and keep it clean. All equipment has a certain safety purpose. If it is broken report it to a manager so that it can be fixed. Equipment should be checked before and after every practice and game.

TEAM RULES

4. INJURIES:

Football is a collision sport. There is no way you can play and not have an assortment of aches and pains. The coaches will always abide by the instructions of the trainer. The trainer will work with the doctors to insure that you never participate if it is unsafe. Report all injuries to the trainer and follow his/her instructions to the letter.

5. TRAINING RULES:

The following three areas are very important.

Conduct: All players are expected to conduct themselves as gentlemen in the classroom and the community. Good football players must have self-discipline. This is not a trait that will just be demonstrated at certain times and places. If you have self-control then you are making a choice in good or bad behavior. Choose correctly.

Rest: This is the training area that is most often abused. It will be very difficult at times to balance family, church, school, sports, and friends. Be careful about trying to do everything at the risk of not getting enough rest. Particularly as the season progresses it is important that you get enough sleep at night. Planning and proper use of time during the school day can keep you from getting behind.

Substance Abuse: We expect all players to stay completely away from all illegal drugs including so-called performance-enhancing drugs (i.e. steroids). If you cannot stop from using these products for the good of the team then you have an addiction problem. If that is the case we want to help you. We do not want people on this team who are so weak and selfish that they cannot either stay away from this area or get help in staying away.

MUS Football Parents' Guide

I. Code of Conduct for Parents

1. Let the coaches do the coaching for all team members.
2. Support the program. Volunteer to assist the team outside of coaching.
3. Be your child's best fan. Positively support your child unconditionally. Acknowledge his effort, support of team members, following instruction from coaches, etc.
4. Support and root for all team members. Foster teamwork.
5. Do not bribe or offer incentives. Orient them to the enjoyment of participating and responsibility to the team.
6. Encourage your child to talk with the coaches. If your child is having difficulties in practice or games or can't make a practice, encourage him to speak directly to the coaches.
7. Understand and display appropriate game behavior (e.g., watch; make positive remarks; do not berate players, officials, or coaches). Remember, your child's self-esteem and game performance is at stake. Be supportive.
8. Monitor your child's stress level at home. Keep an eye on the player to make sure you are helping your child effectively handle the stress from the various activities in life.
9. Monitor eating and sleeping habits. Be sure your child is eating the proper foods and getting adequate rest.
10. Help your child keep his priorities straight. Help your child maintain a balance among schoolwork, family responsibilities, chores, and free time.
11. Keep sport in its proper perspective. Sport should be fun for you and your child. Highly skilled children and their parents must be especially careful to maintain a balanced view.
12. If your child's performance produces strong emotions in you, maintain a calm demeanor. Your relationship with your child remains long after competitive sport days are over. Keep your goals and needs separate from your child's experience.

13. Reality test: If your child has come off the field when their team has lost, but has played their best, help them to see this as a “win.” Remind your child to focus on “process” and not only “results.” Fun and satisfaction should be derived from “striving to win” and playing well and hard.

14. Have fun.

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National Association for Sport and Physical Education, an association of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

II. Do's and Don't's for Sport Parents

DO FOR YOURSELF:

- Get vicarious pleasure from your children's participation, but do not become overly ego-involved,
- Try to enjoy yourself at competitions. Your unhappiness can cause your child to feel guilty.
- Look relaxed, calm, positive, and energized when watching your child compete. Your attitude influences how your child feels and performs.
- Have a life of your own outside of your child's sports participation.

DO WITH OTHER PARENTS:

- Make friends with other parents at events. Socializing can make the event more fun for you.
- Volunteer as much as you can. Youth sports depend upon the time and energy of involved parents.
- Police your own ranks. Work with other parents to ensure that all parents behave appropriately at practices and competitions.

DO WITH COACHES:

- Leave the coaching to the coaches.
- Give them any support they need to help them do their jobs better.
- Communicate with them about your child. You can learn about your child from each other.
- Inform them of relevant issues at home that might affect your child at practice.
- Inquire about the progress of your children. You have a right to know.
- Make the coaches your allies.

DO FOR YOUR CHILDREN:

- Provide guidance for your children, but do not force or pressure them.
- Assist them in setting realistic goals for participation.
- Emphasize fun, skill development and other benefits of sports participation, e.g., cooperation, competition, self-discipline, commitment.
- Show interest in their participation. Help them get to practice, attend competitions, and ask questions.
- Provide a healthy perspective to help children understand success and failure.
- Emphasize and reward effort rather than results.
- Intervene if your child's behavior is unacceptable during practice or competitions.
- Understand that your child may need a break from sports occasionally.
- Give your child some space when needed. Part of sports participation involves children figuring things out for themselves.
- Keep a sense of humor. If you are having fun and laughing, so will your child.

- Provide regular encouragement.
- Be a healthy role model for your child by being positive and relaxed at competitions and by having balance in your life.
- GIVE THEM UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: SHOW THEM YOU LOVE THEM WHETHER THEY WIN OR LOSE!!!

DON'T FOR YOURSELF:

- Base your self-esteem and ego on the success of your child's sports participation.
- Care too much about how your child performs.
- Lose perspective about the importance of your child's sports participation.

DON'T WITH OTHER PARENTS:

- Make enemies of other parents.
- Talk about others in the sports community. Talk to them. It is more constructive.

DON'T WITH COACHES:

- Interfere with their coaching during practice or competitions.
- Work at cross-purposes with them. Make sure you agree philosophically and practically on why your child is playing sports and what they may get out of sports.

DON'T WITH YOUR CHILDREN:

- Expect your children to get anything more from their sport than a good time, physical fitness, and transferable life skills.
- Ignore your child's bad behavior in practice or competitions.
- Ask the child to talk with you immediately after a competition.
- Show negative emotions while watching him perform.
- Make your child feel guilty for the time, energy and money you are spending and the sacrifices you are making.
- Think of your child's sports participation as an investment for which you expect a return.
- Live out your own dreams through your child's sports participation.
- Compare your child's progress with that of other children.
- Badger, harass, use sarcasm, threaten, or use fear to motivate your child. It only demeans them and causes them to hate you.
- Expect anything from your child except their best effort.
- EVER DO ANYTHING THAT WILL CAUSE THEM TO THINK LESS OF THEMSELVES OR OF YOU! !

Source: Michael Taylor, coacht@gym.net

III. 10 Commandments of Sports for Parents

1. Thou shall be sure that your child knows that – win or lose, scared or heroic – you love him, appreciate his efforts, and that you are not disappointed in him.
2. Thou shall try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic capability, his competitive attitude, his sportsmanship--and his actual skill level.
3. Thou shall be helpful. But don't coach him on the way to the rink, track, court, field, or pool – or on the way back home.
4. Thou shall teach your child to enjoy competition for competition's sake, remembering that there are lessons to be learned in winning as well as in losing.
5. Harken, oh parents: Try not to relive your athletic life through your child – or try to create an athletic career to replace the one that you never had.
6. Thou shall not compete with the coach. Remember, in many cases, the coach becomes a hero to the athletes, a person who can do no wrong.
7. Thou shall not compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with that of other members of the squad or team – at least not in his hearing.
8. Thou shall get to know the coach so that you can be sure that his philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to expose your child to him.
9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reactions when they bring home tales of woe – or tales of heroics.
10. Thou shall make a point of understanding courage and the fact that it is relative. Some of us climb mountains but fear flight. Some of us will want to fight but turn to jelly if a spider crawls nearby. A child must learn that courage is not absence of fear, but rather doing something in spite of fear.

Source: <http://www.appleseeds.org/10-sport.htm>