

Captains Course on NFHSLearn.com

Coach Facilitator Guide

Coach:

Thank you for encouraging your student-athletes to take the Captains Course on NFHSLearn.com. The goal of the course is to provide students with an opportunity to think about, and reflect on, the role of a leader. It will also provide valuable knowledge, skills, and tools to help develop your athletes grow into great captains and student leaders.

Each chapter will take 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Your students will need to listen to, and engage with, each chapter, and think about responses to the questions and activities.

While students could sit down and take this course all in one day, it is best to do a chapter or two at a time and spread out the learning. **In fact, we think it is most beneficial if after each chapter you lead your leaders through the discussion questions listed in this guide.** This exercise will help your students connect more deeply with the topic, and will give you a chance to get to know the strengths and personalities of each of your team captains.

Good luck during your upcoming season!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to Leadership

Key Topics:

- Qualities of a good leader
- How do you become a good leader?
- Tri-model of leadership
 - Leader
 - Follower
 - Situation

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What do you see as the most important qualities of a leader? Why did you choose these?
- 2) What are your strengths and weaknesses as a leader?
- 3) How can you continue to develop your skills as a leader?
- 4) How may you need to change your leadership and communication style based on a player's team role and personality type?

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Chapter 2: Who Am I As A Student-Athlete?

Key Topics:

- Goals/values of high school sport
 - Individual
 - Team
- Creating a mission statement

Discussion Questions:

1. What benefits and values are gained from your participation in high school sports?
2. What are some of the responsibilities of being a student-athlete?
3. How do your responsibilities as a student-athlete provide opportunities to develop yourselves as leaders?
4. How may some of your personal values be similar or different to those of your teammates and coaches?
5. What are some strategies to account for differences in values between yourselves, your teammates, and your coaches?

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Chapter 3: What Is My Leadership Style?

Key Topics:

- Leadership style
 - **Expressive** (people-oriented, friendly, approachable, focused on the welfare of the group)
 - **Instrumental** (task-oriented, establishes standards, focused on the group's accomplishments)
- Benefits of each type of leadership style

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Do you view yourself as more of an expressive or instrumental leader?
Why do you think this is the case?
- 2) What are the pros and cons for expressive and instrumental leaders?
- 3) What are some strategies you can use to develop your ability as both an expressive and instrumental leader?
- 4) What do you hope to accomplish as a team leader?

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Chapter 4: What Are My Roles and Responsibilities?

Key Topics:

- Understanding roles and responsibilities
- Four pillars of leadership
 - Positive Peer Modeling
 - Motivation
 - Communication
 - Team Cohesion

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some roles that you have within your sport? What are some roles you have outside of sports?
- 2) Of these four pillars of leadership, which categories do you feel are your strengths? Which of these categories can you work to improve?
- 3) What are some examples of times where you or someone you know has been a good leader? What are some times where you or someone you know has NOT been such a good leader?
- 4) Why is it important that you and your teammates know your individual roles and responsibilities?
- 5) What are some strategies of making sure that the members of your team understand and accept their roles?

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Chapter 5: Positive Peer Modeling

Key Topics:

- Leaders as role models
- Duties and challenges
- Strategies for being a positive role model

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some duties you see yourself having as a role model?
- 2) What are some basic strategies or rules that you can use to guide yourself to be a good role model?
- 3) What are some past circumstances that you felt you acted as a role model?
- 4) Have your duties as a role model ever led to making tough decisions?
How do you make the right choice in these situations?
- 5) Have you ever felt, as a role model, that you made an embarrassing mistake? How did you recover from it?

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Chapter 6: Communication

Key Topics:

- Importance of effective communication
- Strategies for communicating effectively
- Verbal vs. non-verbal communication
- Importance of listening

Discussion Questions:

- 1) When communicating as a student leader, how well do you communicate your messages so that they are clear and easy to understand?
- 2) Thinking back on examples from the chapter, what are some ways that you think you communicate effectively? What parts of your communication can you work to improve?
- 3) Looking ahead, how can you become a better communicator through improved speaking, listening, and non-verbal communication?

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Chapter 7: Motivation

Key Topics:

- What is motivation?
- How can leaders motivate their teammates?
- Setting effective goals

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are some specific motivational duties you have had/will have as a captain?
- 2) What motivates you, both as an individual and as a team?
- 3) As a team leader, how well do you know each member of your team?
 - How can knowing each member of your team help to set goals?
 - How can knowing each member of your team help them to stay motivated?
- 4) What are some examples of motivational strategies from the chapter that you can use that effectively account for the characteristics of the individual player or situation?

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Chapter 8: Team Building and Cohesion

Key Topics:

- Positive impact of team cohesion
- Characteristics leading to team cohesion
- Team building strategies and activities

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Why is team cohesion important?
- 2) How has your team's chemistry affected other parts of your performance and experience in the past?
- 3) What is the difference between task and social cohesion? How cohesive is your team in these two categories?
- 4) What are some ways that, as a captain, you can build and maintain team cohesion?
- 5) Can you think of any team building activities that you do or have done in the past that have helped create team cohesion?

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Chapter 9: Handling Tough Situations

Key Topics:

- Dilemmas often dealt with in high school sports
- Specific strategies to overcome tough situations
- Handling the pressure of leadership during tough situations

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What were some tough situations that you've had to deal with as a leader in the past? What did you do right in these situations? Is there anything that you wish you would've done differently?
- 2) What are some strategies you can use to prepare yourself to deal with difficult situations before they arise?

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Chapter 10: Leadership In Review

Key Topics:

- Overview of course material
- Action plans for applying course material

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What was your overall impression of your experience with the online Captains Course?
- 2) What did you think were some of the most important take-home messages of the Captains Course?
- 3) Looking forward, how do you plan to use the information learned in this course to become a better leader? How can you share some of this useful information with your teammates?