

**PLAY LIKE  
A CHAMPION  
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

## Champion Coach Note

*Educating and Forming Champion Coaches*

### The Joy of Play

The joy of play can be found written on the faces of children and adolescents experiencing what it means to truly enjoy the gift of sports. Whether it's the wide smile of a young athlete learning a new game, or the sweat-laced focus of the competitor striving for victory, we often know the joy of play when we see it. It's important to remember that these moments don't happen without the intentional effort of coaches and administrators who understand the value of *play* and work to promote a positive,



playful environment in practices and games. This doesn't mean that athletes don't work hard - there is certainly joy in hard work - rather that we allow kids to enjoy the activity and remember that these are ultimately *games* being played.

The [short video above](#) features two men who know about the many benefits of sport and the importance of play. As the Director of Recreation for the City of South Bend, you might say play is a full time job for Jonathan Jones. In Chicago, Orlandus Thomas has dedicated his life to promoting the physical and mental benefits of sport, including in his current role as a high school athletic director. Listen to what these two have to say and consider how you can promote the joy of play with your own athletes and teams. **What is one concrete thing you can do in the week ahead to create an environment that supports play and encourages athletes to enjoy their experience?**

*The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing there.*

~ Zechariah 8:5

### Join Us: Quarterly Partner Meetups Begin September 21st!

*Play Like a Champion* is once again hosting our virtual "meetup" series in 2022-2023, an opportunity for youth and high school partners to join us once every few months to discuss important topics in sports and share best practices with fellow leaders. Each session lasts just one-hour and offers a guest speaker, time for



discussion, and an opportunity to ask questions or raise topics of interest with the group. This year's *Quarterly Partner Meetups* will take place on the following Wednesdays during the year: September 21st, November 16th, January 18th and April 19th. All meetups begin at Noon Eastern Time.

Our first meetup on September 21st is titled "**The Joy of Play**" and will feature practical ways to promote the importance of *play* in sport at all ages. [Click the link below to register for free](#) and join us for any of this year's meetups! All registrants will receive an email with the link to join prior to each event!

**Register for September's Partner Meetup!**

## A Prayer for Coaches

Lord, help me to be for these children a model of faith and love. Through my words and actions, may I show them what it means to be a Christian and how to live that faith through a participation in sports. May they know love through my caring for them personally and taking the time to help them grow in skill and virtue. Help me to be truly humble, that I might not be tempted by the pressure to win or to coach for my own sake, but always strive to do what is best for those you have entrusted to my care. Grant me the graces I need to help each of these children reach their absolute best in sport and in life, and give me the strength to remain steadfast in this commitment through the days and weeks to come. Amen.



**Access Resources & Learn More at [www.playlikeachampion.org](http://www.playlikeachampion.org)**

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