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Community Champions: Sports as a Metaphor for Life

By Rob Lucacher



Coaches Dean Myatt (L) and Steve Christensen (R) with the proud players of Team Barcelona Photo Rob Lucacher

On a recent Saturday morning, Team Barcelona, with coaches Dean and Steve at the helm, made it happen, by winning their LMYA soccer game and securing first place in their 5th and 6th grade girls division.

What is their secret? What does it take to prepare young boys and girls to more effectively compete by mastering the technical, emotional and procedural fundamentals of a competitive sport? If we use sports as a universal metaphor for life, how do we establish the essentials of teamwork, purpose and passion as the foundations for building success in everything we do?

Team building and individual achievement are the goals of Steve Christensen and Dean Myatt, two of our local LMYA coaches. Steve and Dean inspire their players through selfless giving and a passion for teaching while actively mentoring each player. This results in a purpose-driven commitment that we all seek to impart to our children so that they can effectively tackle the rigors and challenges of life.

These two men possess complementary skill sets that, when combined, build a tradition of winning teams and proud team members. It's the unique chemistry that Coach Steve and Coach Dean bring to the games of soccer and softball that makes for a winning formula.

Coach Dean's essential strength and focus is on the technical elements of the

game. He identifies the fundamental skills that need to be mastered, sets up a regimen for imparting these skills to his players, evaluates how the clash of wills will play out on the field and what techniques and discipline will be needed to overcome the barriers to success. On the other hand, Coach Steve understands and focuses on the human side of the equation, instilling confidence, joy, spirit and a sense of common purpose so individual players form a more perfect union we call a team. Drawing upon these collective strengths, some of the strategies they use to nurture the heart and skills of their young team members are pre-game discussions, post-game review and weekly recognition for exceptional individual performance.

Yet what makes their teams truly exceptional is how the coaches' good chemistry is translated into effective and purposeful leadership. The emphasis is not on winning but the quality of the competitive spirit as it unfolds on the playing field. After years of coaching together, Coach Steve and Coach Dean have come to know each other so well that each can anticipate the other's response to a specific challenge or opportunity. Building on the core philosophy that "success breeds confidence and confidence breeds greater success," they work together to instill this credo in the minds and hearts of all their players.

Despite having logged 17 seasons of LMYA coaching between them, they never tire of the challenge and opportunity that each new season brings: to educate, unify and inspire a new group of eager young charges. And as the final whistle sounds on yet another season, they file away another batch of great memories and hope to receive the ultimate gratification and measure of success - players who can't wait to sign up to play again next year.

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