



Aura of A Champion Athlete

Varsity teams and even JV teams are becoming increasingly harder to make. For some student-athletes, getting cut as a freshman often means they stop playing their sport for good. Players sometimes make small mistakes that keep them off of a team, or maybe they don't dedicate themselves or play hard enough. From an insider's view -- follow these things to increase your chances of standing out as a special player to your coach at tryouts - and in practices and games -- and when a college coach comes to see you play.

1. **Nod. Yes, it's this simple.** When your coach is speaking nod gently once in awhile to let them know you are listening. This secret will work in the classroom too - or in a large group setting. Speakers will make more eye contact with the nodding person in the group. Try it. You'll see.

2. **Make eye contact with your coach.** Often, young players have wandering eyes when people speak to them. Be respectful and attentive. Look coach in the eye to connect with what they say.

3. **Refuse to make an excuse. Players make excuses for so much stuff.** Make it to practice. Make it to practice on time. Bring your shoes, your helmet, your pads, your hair tie - or whatever it is. Just bring it! And then BRING IT!

4. **Be COACHABLE, and be a sponge.** When your coach tells you how to correct a mistake or how to improve forget about saying BUT I...or I thought. Simply say okay coach, Thank you, or I've got it. Next time.

5. **Focus.** Make a conscious decision before each practice and game that you want to be there and tell yourself you will give it your all. Literally, say out loud or in your head "I am committed



to doing my best during practice, or "For this game I will fully inspire my teammates and play my best and play to win." If you have time, write this down. You will be amazed at the power of writing down your intentions.

6. Be a positive audible force in the practices and games of each of your teammates. This means giving them positive reminders about how to play their best. It will help you stay positive and improve your team's play. For example, "John, great rebound," or "Carla, thanks for that great screen."

7. Practice "no audible sighs." An audible sigh is where you hang your head, say oh no - or otherwise make a negative comment or body language motion after a mistake or something bad happens. Instead, pick up your teammates and focus on the next play. Your coach will love it if they see you acting fierce in the heat of your athletic competition.

8. Stop complaining. Seriously, leave the refs alone. Don't whine or frown if your coach says - GET on the line. Refuse to be that whiner on the team! Just BE a CHAMPION! Your teammates will rally and you'll be a better team. Do what it takes to succeed at a high level every single day in everything you do. If you do this your down days will be far and few between - and if you do have a down day you can recover because you'll have champion credits in the bank.

9. The Positive Coaching Alliance calls it a Good Crummy Day. In other words, if you ARE having a bad day - of course you can find one good thing and do that thing - or encourage those around you. Go to positive-coach.org for more information.

10. Respect your sport enough to shake hands with your opponents and teammates after practices and competition. After practice, this will help everyone leave with a great attitude, ready to study and ready to be a good family member when they got



home. It is a way to acknowledge to your opponents that you both had a well-fought match. Encourage your parents not to yell at the refs and officials. Keep it clean. Be hyped, but remember - it really is just a game. At the end of the day everyone has their own reason for playing their sport.

Part of the benefits of playing sports is to challenge yourself in the face of a tough situation, make good choices in that situation, and to have good character.