

CAPTAINS GUIDE

By Life of an Athlete NH



ELEVATE YOUR TEAM.

Read, Understand, and Commit
to living the Life of an Athlete.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Congratulations	1
Introduction to Leadership	2
Captains Job Description	3
Styles of Leadership	4
Foundation of a Leader	5
Integrity	7
Positive vs Negative Leadership	9
On and Off Field Conduct	10
Relationship with Coach	11
Relationship with Teammates	12
Team Dynamics	13
Conflict Resolution Process	14
Leadership Meetings	15
What Else Can I Learn?	17
Leadership Evaluation	19

“Your actions should be so dedicated that no one will ask what you want.”



**LIFE OF AN
ATHLETE**

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have been chosen as a leader or captain of your team!

This guide is provided as a reference point to use when questions or conflicts arise. Being a leader is no easy task. Leaders are bound to come across adversity and problems that must be overcome on a regular basis. This guide will help captains understand how to be a positive leader for the team and school. There is no one right way to be an affective, dynamic CAPTAIN. By having an open mind, good communication skills and the ability to self-assess captains will be well on their way to being successful.

Being selected as a captain is a tremendous honor and privilege. There is also a huge amount of responsibility that comes along with the “C” on the front of the jersey or patch that is worn.

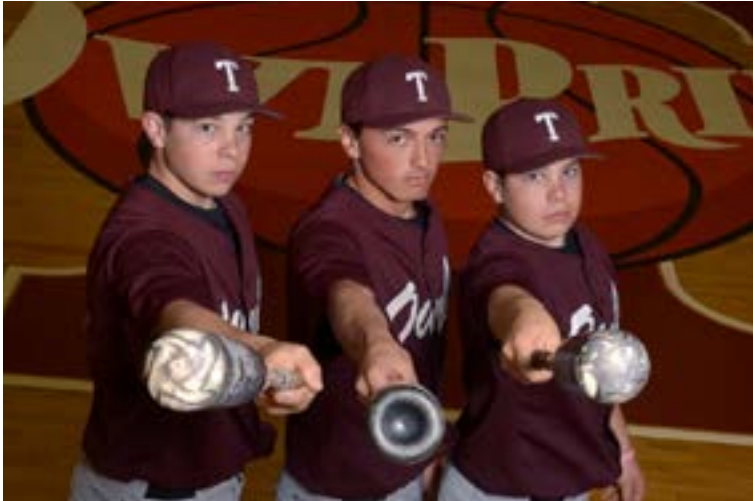
Follow this guide to learn more about what it means to be a captain, how to figure out team dynamics, how to effectively communicate with the coach, and more!

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- John Underwood, Founder, Life of an Athlete
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“Remember that success happens when opportunity meets hard work!”

IF YOU WANT TO WALK THE WALK, **YOU MUST TALK THE TALK.**



TIMBERLANE HIGH SCHOOL



EPPING HIGH SCHOOL

Captains are expected to be a leader on and off the fields, rinks, courts, school and community. Wherever a student athlete may be, they not only represent themselves, but also their team, school, family, community and fellow teammates.

A captain will also be acting as a bridge between an immediate supervisor (Coach) and their fellow teammates. Tough decisions will have to be made. The end result may not always be pleasant, but will be the right choice. However, there is no specific style or personality needed to be a captain, those chosen to lead, have already demonstrated some of the values that compel others to follow. They are the role models of their community. A role model is someone who is looked up to and turned to for leadership in any group of people. Role models must exemplify accessibility, desire to teach, and upstanding character.

Everyone has the ability to be a leader, there is no one right or wrong way. The most important thing right now is for a leader to be themselves and lead in the positive direction!

¹American Athletic Institute Study, 2008

High school athletes lose between 15% and 30% from their overall performance when they drink alcohol.¹

LIFE OF AN ATHLETE'S CAPTAINS JOB DESCRIPTION

CAPTAIN'S CODE

- Loyalty to family, school, coaches, team and teammates;
- Compete every day with honor and integrity on and off the playing field;
- Ready to lead, willing to follow, always an agent of change;
- Be the example in ALL situations;
- Take responsibility for actions and actions of teammates
- Excel through discipline and innovation both in the classroom and during athletic events;
- Persevere and thrive on adversity;
- Train for competition, and compete to win;
- Be a role model each and every day as a student athlete leader.



As a student athlete leader for the Life of an Athlete Program, one must demonstrate the ability to:

- Conduct themselves on and off the fields of play with behavior that is an example to others
- Communicate with a high level of skill
- Confront any behavior of concern or violations of standards from the student-athlete code of conduct
- Act as a conduit between team and coach
- Bring any serious concerns to the attention of adult authority
- Hold team meetings to discuss lifestyle choices
- Ensure and inspire team goals and effectiveness
- Model healthy behaviors

STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a process of mutual influence directed at achieving purposeful results. The development of leadership begins with personal initiative and awareness, understanding one's passion, motivations, strengths, limits, and personal values. The process of self-discovery is ongoing and the pursuit of leadership requires perseverance and a commitment to perpetual learning.*

Leadership styles vary, it is important for captains to find their own style and then begin working to fine tune their strengths.

Quiet Leadership

A quiet person leads by example by demonstrating the following behaviors:

- Playing hard
- Being respectful to officials
- Staying focused during practice and games
- Performing well
- Setting the bar in the classroom
- Having confidence to take a stand on alcohol, drugs and other prohibited substances
- Making choices for nutrition and sleep based on solid statistics and studies

Vocal Leadership

A vocal person leads by working hard and verbally motivating the team by demonstrating the following behaviors:

- Maintaining a positive atmosphere
- Setting the bar in the classroom
- Discussing choices for alcohol, drugs, and other prohibited substance
- Discussing choices for nutrition and sleep based on solid statics and studies
- Performing well



No matter what the style, everyone works toward the same message. We must make wise choices: good nutrition based on hard facts, healthy sleep habits and zero tolerance for the use of drug and alcohol. Student athlete leaders in the Life of an Athlete program break new ground and demonstrate the ability to change team and school cultures, ultimately creating a healthier atmosphere in communities.

*Illinois Leadership Certificate Program

FOUNDATION OF A LEADER

WHY ME COACH?

Captains are picked based on the **5 C's of leadership**:

Captains tend to be strong in some areas, but weak in others. As leaders of their team, captains must be willing to consistently practice in all areas of leadership. Included in this guide is a self-evaluation to assist captains in efforts to improve in all areas on a daily basis.

THE 5 C'S OF LEADERSHIP:



COMPETENCE:

has necessary level of skill development, knowledge, fitness, and healthy behavior.



CITIZENSHIP:

social responsibility to the team community through commitment, teamwork and role modeling.



CHEMICAL HEALTH:

supports zero tolerance of chemical health use, both individually and on the team.



CHARACTER:

demonstrate attitudes and behavior that relate to moral strength, including responsibility, accountability, dedication, self-control, trustworthiness and fair play.



CIVILITY:

shows characteristics of honesty, loyalty, enthusiasm, decisiveness, endurance, fairness, and courage.

FOUNDATION OF A LEADER

The foundation of leadership starts with credibility. Once a captain has the credibility to be a leader, he/she must look at the rest of these traits of a leader to maintain a positive leadership style.



CREDIBILITY

INTEGRITY

INTEGRITY REQUIRES COURAGE!

Integrity is a character trait that can demonstrate a positive reflection of a student athlete. It is a choice of positive behavior and positive spirit. A person with integrity exemplifies truthfulness, honesty, caring about others, dependability, trust and respect. Student athletes who have integrity not only have a positive affect on a team, but they act as a role model for the whole community.

A student athlete who is living ethically and honestly can and will disagree with their teammates in situations such as drinking, smoking, or other illegal activities. Having integrity could mean that you are the only person in a group who is taking an ethical stand. It may be intimidating but living life with integrity will ALWAYS pay off in many ways!¹

LIVING WITH INTEGRITY MEANS:

- Not settling for less than you know you deserve for your relationships
- Asking for what you want and need from others
- Speaking the truth, even though it might create conflict or tension
- Behaving in ways that are in harmony with your personal values²

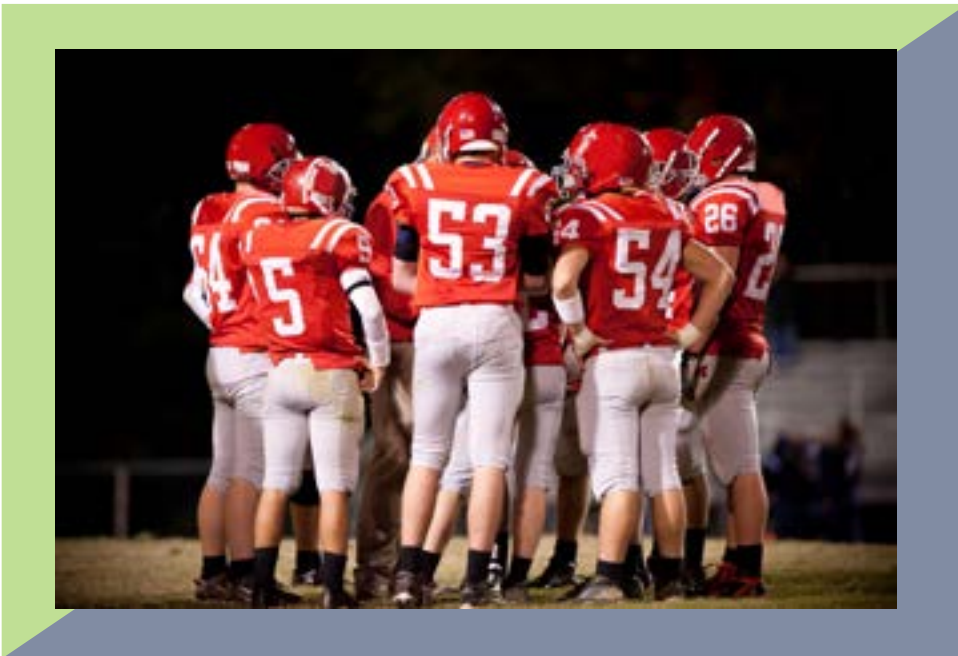
¹Champions of Character: Part 3- Integrity,
National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes)

²Barbara De Angelis, best-selling author of self-help books

**Remember that success happens when
opportunity meets hard work!**

INTEGRITY

WITHOUT IT YOU'RE GOING NOWHERE



WHAT DOES INTEGRITY LOOK LIKE?

- Integrity keeps commitments.
- Integrity tells the truth.
- Integrity takes a stand for what's right— even when it's not popular.
- Integrity has a strong sense of self.
- Integrity respects others, their beliefs and their skills.
- Integrity is dedicated to a code of ethics.
- Integrity has inner strengths.
- Integrity associates with people who have strong morals.
- Integrity lends a helping hand.
- Integrity has discipline and self-control.

POSITIVE VS NEGATIVE LEADERSHIP

👍 POSITIVE LEADERSHIP

- Understands the power of and uses team in solving problems.
- Is coaching oriented.
- Uses members of the team's knowledge and opinions to make decisions.
- Shares a vision that the team wants to move towards.
- Teaches team to be self-reliant.
- Models teamwork and concern for the greater good.
- Creates and communicates values first.
- Knows giving up control yields the best outcomes.
- Focuses on achieving performance outcomes.
- Helps team to learn from errors.
- Uses leadership characteristics to make decisions.

👎 NEGATIVE LEADERSHIP

- Needs to have and use own answers.
- Is authoritative.
- Makes decisions by oneself and does not care about others opinions.
- Pushes for results.
- Teaches team to expect direction.
- Is concerned about self first.
- Produces reports first.
- Is afraid of losing control.
- Focuses on finding and fixing their own problems.
- Quick to punish for mistakes.
- Uses rules to make decisions.



ON AND OFF FIELD CONDUCT



As student athletes it is important to always be respectful in every situation. Student athletes will come across adversity in life and through how situations unfold. As leaders, it is important to conduct actions in a way that shows composure, respect, and caring to all other parties involved. Tensions may be high on the field, court, or rink during play but leaders of the team must be **CALM, COOL, AND COLLECTED.**

THIS INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:

- Picking teammates and opposing players off the ground if they have fallen
- Shaking hands with opposing teams after the game
- Not trash talking
- Not taunting
- Keeping other teammates under control
- Respecting coaches
- Being respectful to fans
- Not questioning an officials call
- Thanking officials after games
- Respecting teachers, administrators, parents and others in your community
- Getting involved in school community service projects and groups

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COACH



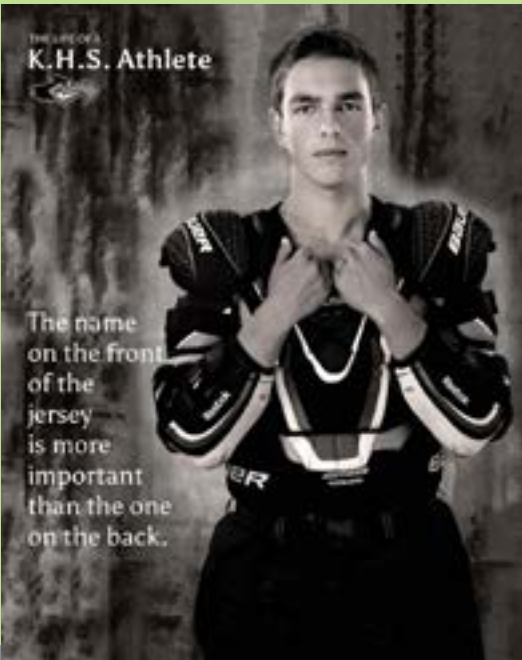
A Captain's ability to develop a relationship with the coach and his or her teammates is crucial to the team's success. Remember a key point from a previous statement: "A captain is the bridge between the coach and their teammates but, the coach will always have the final decision. To be successful, every part of the team must be on the same page from the coach all the way to the practice players."

COACH/CAPTAIN SUGGESTIONS:

Set mutual expectations and goals:

- List the process to address problems and establish a chain of command
- Review job description
- Set a daily meeting time
- Maintain respectful communication to ensure mutual trust
- Set Coach/ Captain boundaries to prevent "Preferential treatment"

RELATIONSHIP WITH TEAMMATES



The relationship between captain and teammates is one of the most critical steps in leadership. Captains need to understand that as a leader they **MUST** embrace “ALL” and that they cannot do the job alone. The more teammates that are empowered in the decision making process or the operation of the team, the stronger the team. In any situation a team that functions as one unit will be more successful as a team that has multiple groups trying to work together.

STAY RESPECTFUL & POSITIVE

There is no team without a team leader, just like there is not a leader without a team.

ITS ALL ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

WE not **I**

OURS not **MINE**

US not **ME**

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!

¹American Athletic Institute Study,2008

High school athletes lose 15%-30% from their overall performance when they drink.¹

TEAM DYNAMICS

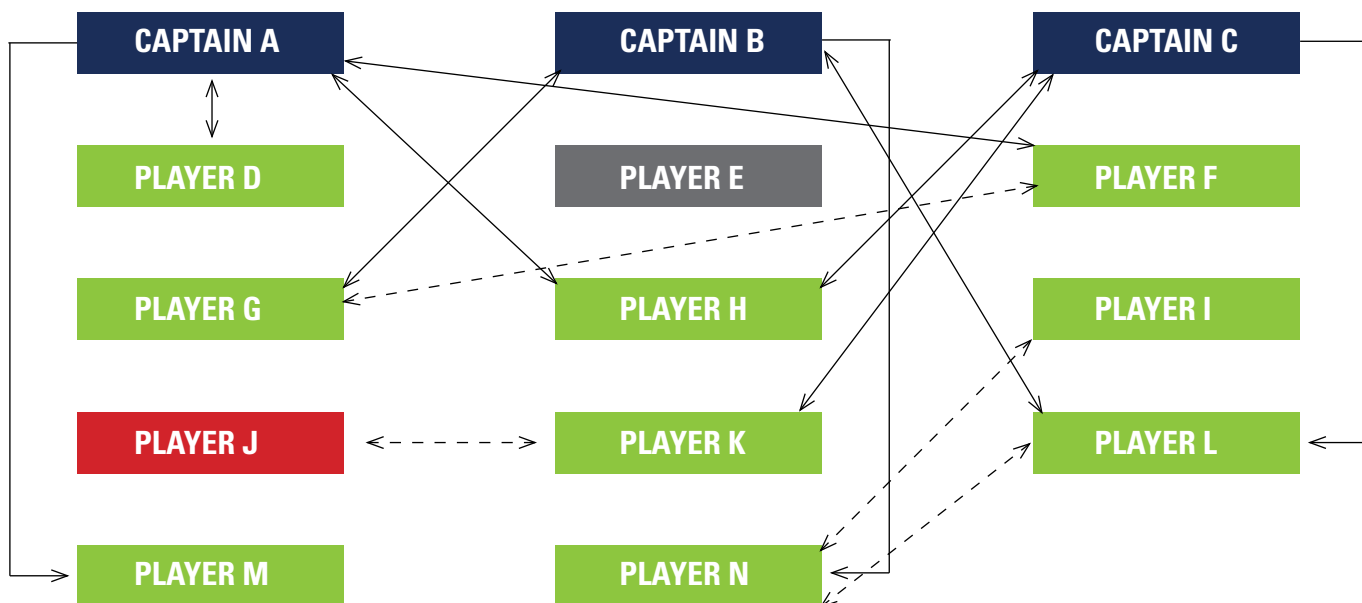
Co-Captains must be on the same page when addressing the team on or off fields/courts. Disagreements are ok, but before the team is addressed all captains must walk the same walk and talk the same talk. Once all the captains involved have discussed each other's strengths and weaknesses, it is time to find out about team dynamics. Break down the team by class/name and try to figure out who is connected to whom. This becomes important to know so that when problems or obstacles arise, captains are prepared to empower the appropriate teammates to help solve the issue at hand. Leadership is not telling people what to do, it is empowering them to do what needs to get done.

After figuring out the team dynamics, sit with the coach to develop a realistic, attainable team goal (vision) together. One important thing to remember when looking at your connections is that the person with NO connections should be the FIRST person reached out to by captains (see Player E below).

In the graphic below there are tri-captains. Each captain has a relationship with other individual players on the team (solid line). Some players on the team may have relationships with other players on the team already (dotted line) but not the captains. If a problem arises it is the responsibility of the captains to work together to figure out the relationships on the team (team dynamics) to best address the situation.

Question: Player J has been skipping school to hang out with their friends. As captains how would you address this problem with Player J?

Answer: Captain C would work with Player K, who has a connection with Player J to address the problem at hand.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

- The athlete should discuss the issue within the team. This might be facilitated by the team leader. The team leader might also offer to go with the athlete in conflict to the coach.
- The representative of that grade should attempt to resolve any issues.
- If the conflict can not be resolved between the athlete and the coach, the athlete should make an appointment to meet with the director of athletics.
- If the problem is still unresolved, then the parent should contact the coach.
- Only when the problem can not be resolved with the coach, should the parent contact the director of athletics.

IMPORTANT

Topics that will not be discussed include the following:

- 1) Playing time
- 2) Discussions about other athletes
- 3) Game strategies

In the event that there is a serious conflict or communication inability between two parties, the process would proceed to the next level listed below.

THESE ARE THE STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- 1 **ATHLETE – CAPTAIN/TEAM LEADER**
- 2 **ATHLETE – COACH**
- 3 **ATHLETE & COACH – ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**
- 4 **PARENT – COACH**
- 5 **PARENT – ATHLETIC DIRECTOR**
- 6 **PARENT – PRINCIPAL**
- 7 **PARENT – SUPERINTENDENT**
- 8 **PARENT – BOARD OF EDUCATION**

LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

To have successful meetings, the right players must be at the table. The players that are crucial to have in this regular meeting are the coach(s), captain(s) and representatives in each grade in high school that have a sense of everyone their age. Once this team is created, it is important to meet on a weekly basis to get the tone of the team and address any problems that may be preventing the team from their goals. The idea of the leadership table is to give the captains and students ownership of the team. By giving them ownership, the student athletes will care more about the team and will have more a drive to succeed.

LEADERSHIP TABLE



¹American Athletic Institute Study,2008

One night of binge drinking eliminates the impact of two weeks of training. ¹

LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

As team leaders it is always important to have realistic goals that can be attained by reachable benchmarks. For every team, the ultimate goal is winning the championship, however it is important to recognize there is a long road to get there. It is crucial for captains to outline attainable benchmarks that will lead to smaller successes and lead to the ultimate success of winning the state championship! Below is an example of a realistic set of increments that will lead a team to winning the state championship.



WHAT ELSE CAN I LEARN?



APPRECIATE TEAMMATES: They don't care who the captain is, how much they know or how good they are until they know how much the captain cares about them. Without appreciation for everyone on the team, nobody will ever be a successful leader.

VALUE ALL TEAMMATES: Include all teammates in team functions and team meetings.

RESPECT YOUR TEAMMATES: Although guidance is sometimes necessary, the thoughts and decisions of every teammate are important.

UNDERSTAND INDIVIDUAL WORTH: From the starter to the practice player, never make a contribution from any teammate second class in nature. Show them and teach them their worth!

CLARIFY RULES: Help other teammates understand their individual role and the importance of that role in the team's success.

*Photo Credit: Jamie Roach / Shutterstock.com

WHAT ELSE CAN I LEARN?

CARE ABOUT TEAMMATES: Great teams, led by solid leadership are aware of all of their teammates actions on and off the field.

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES: Make time for team building activities. They are important because they help in forming relationships with teammates.

SPORTSMANSHIP: A team captain's responsibility is to ensure that the team keeps their composure on the field/court. It is important to manage emotions in the "heat of battle". Remember SPORTSMANSHIP has nothing to do with athletic talent or ability, however it is a direct reflection of LEADERSHIP.

STUDENT BODY: Every member of the student body is a potential teammate or fan. Treat the student body no differently than the team you are in charge of. Get to know other team captains. Learning to support each other makes all captains better leaders.

COMMUNITY: As a student athlete leader you are a representative of your team, school, and community on and off the athletic fields. Captains are always under the microscope. The youth in the community look up to captains. Get involved with a community service project, and make choices that model positive behaviors. The help captains provide will always be appreciated in the community and can open many doors in life that could lead to further success on and off the athletic fields.



LEADERSHIP EVALUATION²

Using a scale of one to five, rank yourself as a team leader on the following 28 questions

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Undecided 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

HOW I SEE MYSELF AS A LEADER

- I am one of the hardest workers on the team
- I care deeply about the team's success
- I am a competitive person who strives to win
- I have confidence in myself as a person and my ability to be a leader
- I perform in pressure situations
- I bounce back quickly following mistakes and losses
- I stay calm and composed in pressure situations
- I stay focused when faced with distractions, obstacles, and adversity
- I keep my anger and frustration under control
- I constantly do the right thing on and off the court/field
- I am honest and trustworthy
- I treat teammates, coaches and others with respect

HOW I SEE MY TEAMMATES AS A LEADER

- I reach out to teammates when they need help
- I take the time to listen to teammates
- I regularly encourage my teammates to do their best
- I regularly compliment my teammates when they succeed
- I communicate optimism and hope when the team is struggling
- I know what to say to teammates when they are struggling
- I have developed an effective relationship with each teammate
- I am a team player who seeks to unify the team

IMPORTANT: Remember this is just an evaluation and shows where there is opportunity for growth as a leader.

²American Athletic Institute Leadership Evaluation (Adapted from Janssen 2005)

LEADERSHIP EVALUATION

Using a scale of one to five, rank yourself as a team leader on the following 28 questions

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Undecided 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ME AND TEAM

- I hold teammates accountable for following team rules and standards
- I constructively confront teammates when necessary
- I am willing to address and minimize conflicts between teammates
- I am firm, fair and direct when dealing with conflicts and problems

CHEMICAL HEALTH ISSUES

- I am committed to ensure that our team is drug free at all times
- I will confront any team member who uses drugs
- I will discuss chemical health issues with my teammates
- I am willing to bring drug use issues to the coaches' attention

TOTAL SCORE: _____

“Me as a Leader” This Self Evaluation measures critical areas you need to have to be an effective leader. To compute your personal leader score, add your ratings for the first 12 questions.

12–44= Not a leader

45–52= Solid leader

53–60= Spectacular leader

The total for the “Me as a Leader” section should at least be 45 or higher. Anything 44 and below you are not successfully leading enough to earn the respect of your teammates. The closer the score is to 60, the more you are capable of leading.

“Team Leader” The total score for all 28 questions will give you your captain's rating as an Assertive Leader

34–99= Not an assertive leader

100–121= Solid assertive leader

122–140= Spectacular assertive leader

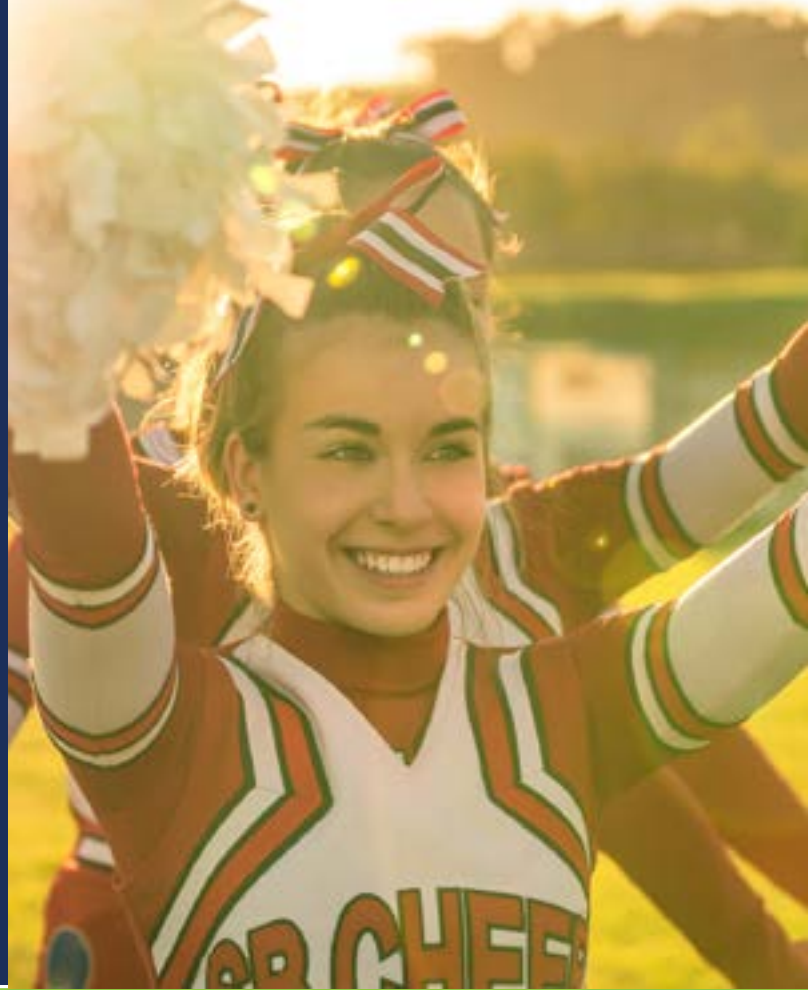
IMPORTANT: Remember this is just an evaluation and shows where there is opportunity for growth as a leader.



LIFE OF AN ATHLETE

Thank you for reading the Life of an Athlete's Captains Guide. It is our goal to empower the leaders of New Hampshire High Schools to lead in the positive direction. With your help, as leaders, we will be able to change the climate in the NHIAA member schools.

Guarantee; there are no guarantees that great leadership will equal a state championship, but great leaders will inspire others to rise and take advantage of the life lessons being taught on a daily basis.



NHIAA | LIFE OF AN ATHLETE

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SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE!

