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PLC Unveils Player Handbook *From Player... to Champion... to Leader*

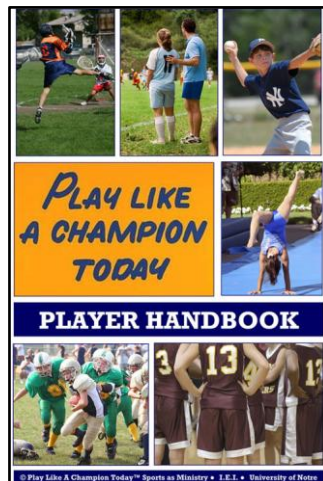
PLC is now proud to present the Player Handbook for athletes to use as a tool to maximize their sport experience. This handbook is designed to help players grow physically, emotionally, socially, morally, and spiritually with week-by-week reflections and self-evaluation of one's journey toward becoming a Champion!

To accompany the Player Handbook, coaches may use the companion Leader's Guide to effectively utilize the handbook in team meetings and in between practices. The Player Handbook is an excellent tool for engaging players in team building sessions as well as encouraging the development of character.

The Player Handbook will guide players through such concepts as:

- Champion Goal-Setting
- Building Team Cohesion
- Sportsmanship
- Building Virtues through Sport
- Winning and Losing as a Champion

The cost is \$5 for each Player Handbook, which can be ordered directly by phone or email through the PLC office. As an introductory offer, you may obtain a FREE Leader's Guide in 2008 when you purchase handbooks for a full team. Order now before the winter season begins!



Los Angeles Family Summit

On Saturday, October 4, PLC conducted a Family Summit sponsored by the Notre Dame Club of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles CYO, the Knights of Columbus and Bishop Amat Catholic High School in LaPuente, CA. Families in the greater Los Angeles area were invited to the free event to examine the role of sports in our society.

After a great meal provided by the KofC, Clark Power presented our Parent Like A Champion Today™ workshop to parents anxious to know how to most effectively guide their own young athletes through their youth sports journey. Parents were briefed on strategies to build uplifting athletic climates and to empower their children through sports. While Clark educated the parents, Kristin Sheehan energized the kids with an athlete seminar encouraging goal setting, sportsmanship, fair play and respect in the sports arena.

Following these dynamic seminars, parents and athletes came back together to hear three former Notre Dame football players speak about "The Total Package: Bringing Academic and Athletic Excellence Together." Cory Minor, Joey Getherall and Purnell Taylor spoke of the



success at ND and in life. These elite athletes provided strong, positive role modeling for the young athletes, helping them to understand the importance of studying, working hard, sportsmanship and respect.

PLC looks forward to repeating this model of community partnership in other partner cities. We are grateful to the leadership of Bob and Susan Byrne of the LA area Notre Dame Club who coordinated and made the entire event possible. Bishop Amat Catholic High School, who hosted the Summit, was pleased to attract families from their surrounding community to spend an afternoon in their school and showcase their programs. It was a wonderful opportunity for the Los Angeles CYO to kick-off the Parent Like A Champion Today™ program for 2008-2009!

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Letter from the Director

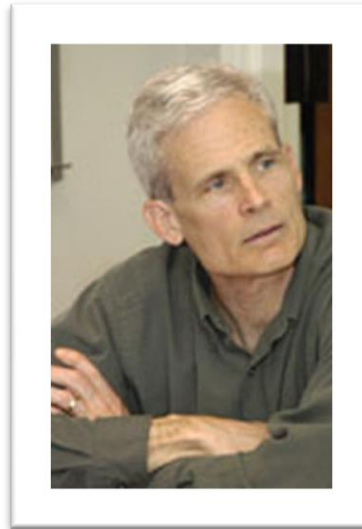
PLC's Safe Environment Component

Dr. Clark Power

In 2006, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops required that anyone working with children and adolescents in a Catholic Church sponsored program take a "safe environment" course. The Bishops audit all dioceses in the country to ensure compliance. Dioceses have selected various programs to satisfy this mandate, for example, VIRTUS, "Protecting God's Children," and St. Mary's Press. Some dioceses have designed their own programs. These programs increase awareness about the seriousness of child abuse and help those working with children to identify signs of possible abuse and to respond responsibly.

In 2007, at the request of the Catholic Youth Organization (C.Y.O.) Archdiocese of Los Angeles, we developed a safe environment program specifically for Catholic youth and high school coaches. The CYO of Los Angeles delivers this program as a part of the PLC coaching workshop. Embedding safe environment training within the PLC Sports as Ministry workshop eliminates the burden of requiring coaches to attend two separate workshops. Moreover, the PLC safe environment program addresses problems that arise specifically within the sports context. Finally, the PLC program challenges coaches not only to protect children but to minister to them in ways that help them to grow spiritually and psychologically.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has used the PLC Sports as Ministry Program with the safe environment program for over two years now with great success. The coach's ratings for the Los Angeles workshops are among the highest in the country. The vast majority of coaches are



completely dedicated to giving children the best possible sports experience. They sometimes resent having to attend a workshop that deals exclusively with abuse. They are, however, far more receptive to learning about abuse prevention as part of a workshop that aims to make them more effective coaches and honor their commitment as a form of ministry.

We are very grateful to the Archdiocese of Los Angeles for working with us to provide a comprehensive "one-stop" shopping approach to coach education and safe environment training. We urge dioceses around the country to consider this model, which has worked so well in Los Angeles. We currently include a detailed section on the "safe sports environment" as an appendix to both the coach and parent manuals. We have now produced a modified PowerPoint presentation that includes slides and discussion points around these essential issues.

Partner Profile: KCPL Requires Parent Program

By Vince Fitzgerald, KCPL Director

The Kansas City Parochial League (KCPL) has been a PLC partner since 2007, they have trained over 500 coaches in the Sports as Ministry program and this year they will require their parents to attend PLC Parent workshops as coaches.

As with many youth sport programs, whether that be public or Catholic sports programs, parents can be a distraction at athletic contests. In the Parochial League we have a few of these parents as well. With this in mind, we decided to adopt the Parent Like A Champion Today™ program for the current school year. In the Parochial League we have 24 schools who participate in football, volleyball, basketball and track. One of the biggest chores we faced was how to implement the parent program league-wide.

We have a Superintendent of Schools who is not only supportive of our sports program, but sees it as an extension of the Catholic school experience. I knew that having the blessing and support from the Diocesan School Office would be essential when parents complained about having to attend a Parent Like A Champion Today™ training. When parents contact the school office, they always inform them that they are aware of and behind the program. The most popular complaint that I receive is that training should only be for those parents who act inappropriately at games.

I always explain to them that while a small portion of the training does pertain to the issue of sportsmanship, we are providing them with a reduced version of the PLC coaches training, giving them the opportunity to learn what we are telling the coaches and apply it to their role as parents.



So far this year, we have had over twelve parent trainings and over 90% of the parent's surveys of the program have shown that they are very receptive to the program. I have been very fortunate to have three of my board members who do all of the coach and parent training. All three of them volunteer to do this and are very strong believers in the PLC programs. I believe the main reason our reviews have been overwhelmingly supportive from both the coaches and parents is that they realize our strong commitment to the PLC programs and our desire to provide an excellent athletic program to the children of this Diocese.

Partners New and Old in 2008-2009

We are very proud to be partners with twenty-eight schools, parishes, and leagues as of the Fall of 2008. We look forward to a long relationship with each of the following organizations:

- Archdiocese of Denver, CO*
- Archdiocese of Los Angeles, CA
- Archdiocese of Seattle, WA
- Catholic School System of Niagara, ON
- CYO of Nassau-Suffolk, NY*
- Dallas Parochial League, TX
- Diocese of Erie, PA
- Diocese of Gary, IN
- Diocese of Orlando, FL
- Diocese of Rochester, NY
- Diocese of Salina, KS
- Fort Worth Christian Football League, TX*
- Holy Family Parish, Austin, TX
- Rosary High School, LA*
- Kansas City Parochial League, MO
- Minnesota Youth Soccer Association, MN
- Our Lady of Calvary, Philadelphia, PA*
- Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Indianapolis, IN
- Sacred Heart Cathedral School, Knoxville, TN
- St. Ann School, Chicago, IL*
- St. Brigid of Kildare, Columbus, OH
- St. Gregory the Great High School, Chicago, IL*
- St. Joseph Parish, South Bend, IN
- St. Pius X Church, Granger, IN*
- St. Pius X School, Tulsa, OK
- St. Theresa's Parish, Southgate, KY*
- St. Therese's Parish, Austin, TX
- St. Thomas the Apostle, Elkhart, IN*

*New partners in 2008-2009

Hot Issues in Sports

Developing Parents as Partners

Undoubtedly one of the biggest issues that coaches discuss in our PLC workshops is how to effectively communicate with parents. In this issue of the PLC Newsletter we will briefly review the strategies in "Part 6: Developing Parents as Partners" of the SAM workshop and invite you to share your best practices or discussion topics on our blog <http://playlikeachampioneducationalseries.blogspot.com>.

1. Get on the same page. Parents and coaches want the same thing: for their children to become Champions! Parents should help coaches to become aware of their children's particular needs, while coaches should make parents aware of the needs of the entire team. Coaches: send an introductory letter at the beginning of the year and invite parents to a preseason meeting (See www.playlikeachampion.org/coaches/parents.html)

2. Encourage parents to keep their expectations in perspective. The odds of a high school athlete becoming a professional athlete are less than 1 in 13,000 according to a study published by the NCAA: http://www.ncaa.org/research/prob_of_competing/index.html.

3. Encourage parents to act as parents. Children need their parents to positively motivate them. Coaches: help parents to understand the importance of PLC's GROW philosophy.

4. Promote positive sideline behavior. Coaches: set expectations for positive behavior and clearly define unacceptable behavior.

5. Solicit parents' input at the end of the season. Download copies of the Parent Survey on our website Coaches Page (www.playlikeachampion.org/coaches/surveys.html) or make copies of the survey from the back of your manual. This information will help you and PLC continue to improve.

Effective Communication Tips:

- Pre-season communication: letter and pre-season meeting
- Establish specific times to be available to talk on the phone or by email.
- Appoint a parent liaison, a team manager, or Champion Committee.
- Collect post-season evaluations from parents and athletes.
- Host a post-season celebration.
- Send weekly email updates or create a team website.
- Do not communicate when either you or the parent is angry.

Post your comments and share your ideas about this topic on our blog:

<http://playlikeachampioneducationalseries.blogspot.com>

Mark your Calendars!

PLC Leadership Conference, June 26-28, 2009

The fourth annual PLC Leadership Conference is already on its way! Plan to join youth and high school coaches and administrators of sports programs from all across North America to exchange ideas, receive PLC training, experience first-hand the athletic tradition of the University of Notre Dame, and meet some of the most inspirational figures in sports today.

Online Recertification Set to Debut in January 2009

Through a partnership with the Satellite Theological Education Program (STEP) at the University of Notre Dame, PLC will be offering an online recertification course to the coaches trained in the Sports as Ministry Program in 2006-2007. The course will be a review of the program, but also offer advanced strategies through online training sessions and virtual discussions. To learn more about STEP, visit <http://step.nd.edu/>.

NCEA Convention, April 14-16, 2009

In April 2009, the PLC team will be presenting at the NCEA Convention in Anaheim, California to representatives of primary and secondary Catholic schools in the United States about the Sports as Ministry Initiative.