



Director of Development

Remote, US

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About Play Like A Champion Today

Play Like a Champion Today Educational Series is an independent 501(c)(3) organization leading a nationwide effort to change the culture of youth sports through education, research, and consultation. Since 2006, Play Like a Champion Today has served more than 187,000 coaches and parents through a network of more than 300 partners across North America. Together, these adults shape the experiences of more than one million children.

Play Like a Champion Today works with schools, dioceses, leagues, sports organizations, and community leaders to create athletic environments where every child can play, belong, and develop. Its research-based programs move beyond the basics of sport to equip coaches, parents, administrators, and student-athletes with practical tools for motivation; team building; leadership; faith and virtue formation; social emotional learning; and whole-child development.

With historical ties to the University of Notre Dame, where faculty, coaches, administrators, and practitioners brought together expertise in moral education, developmental psychology, theology, and sport science. In 2016, following more than a decade at Notre Dame, Play Like a Champion Today became an independent nonprofit. That transition created a platform for national growth while preserving the organization's close relationship with Notre Dame and its commitment to rigorous, evidence-informed programming.

Play Like a Champion Today is entering an important next chapter. With established programs, trusted partnerships, a growing community-impact model, and a compelling case for broader investment, the organization is creating its first Director of Development position to build the philanthropic capacity required for sustained national impact.

Mission

Play Like a Champion Today is dedicated to changing the culture of youth sports through education and consultation and to creating opportunities for all children to experience the joy and developmental benefits of sport, regardless of ability or socioeconomic status.

A Vision for Youth Sports

Play Like a Champion Today believes every child deserves the opportunity to play in a safe, fun, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate environment. Sport should help young people grow physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, morally, and, within faith-based settings, spiritually. The organization works toward a future in which quality youth sports are understood as a public good and every community has the relationships, knowledge, and resources to make that opportunity real.

Core Values

- **Kinship.** Play Like a Champion Today walks alongside partners, taking time to recognize the dignity, identity, knowledge, and strengths of each community. The organization builds trust through a together-with approach rather than imposing top-down solutions.
- **Community.** Teams, schools, dioceses, neighborhoods, and local organizations are the heartbeat of the mission. Play Like a Champion Today works with community leaders to create places where children can play, belong, and thrive.

- **Collaboration.** Expanding access to quality sport requires shared effort across organizations and sectors. Play Like a Champion Today helps schools, sports programs, city leaders, healthcare institutions, funders, and other partners draw strength from one another and increase local impact.
- **Education.** For more than 20 years, Play Like a Champion Today has translated research into practical, engaging education for adults and young people. Its training gives communities the tools to elevate sports culture and support the whole development of children.

Programs and Impact

Play Like a Champion Today combines research-based curricula, a scalable train-the-trainer model, continuing education, and long-term consultation. Programs are tailored to the identity and needs of each partner and are offered in both faith-based and secular settings.

This work is grounded in the belief that sport can be life-saving and transformative. In communities where young people face violence, isolation, school disengagement, and too few constructive opportunities, Play Like a Champion Today helps create consistent access to caring adult mentors, positive teams, and co-curricular experiences that build character, confidence, connection, and well-being.

- **Developing Champions for the Next 20 Years** - As Play Like a Champion Today marks more than two decades of impact, it is building toward a more sustainable and far-reaching future. The organization's priorities include deepening work in targeted communities of concentrated poverty, expanding educational partnerships, strengthening evaluation and evidence of impact, and building the philanthropic resources necessary to make quality sport accessible to more children.
- **A Team for Every Child** - Through A Team for Every Child, Play Like a Champion Today partners with leaders in under-resourced communities to expand access to safe, high-quality sport and recreation. The organization begins by listening, assessing community assets and needs, and building trust. It then helps local programs form collaborative associations that can coordinate services, share resources, strengthen operations, collect data, and pursue funding together.
- **Parent and Athlete Programs** - Parent Like a Champion workshops help families understand their role in a healthy sports experience and build productive partnerships with coaches and programs. Student-athlete offerings include leadership seminars, retreats, CHAMPS groups, servant-leadership formation, and resources that help young people become moral leaders on their teams, in their schools, and in their communities.
- **Coach Education** - Interactive clinics prepare coaches and athletic leaders to build cohesive teams, motivate young people, protect the joyful dimension of sport, and support athletes' physical, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual development. Faith-based Coaching as Ministry programs integrate Catholic theology, virtue formation, and the understanding of coaching as a vocation of service. Additional offerings address topics including trauma-responsive coaching, bullying, and hazing, mental toughness and resiliency, parents as partners, and athletes with disabilities.

- **Train the Trainer and Continuing Partnership** - Play Like a Champion Today equips local leaders to deliver programming within their own communities. This approach increases affordability, sustainability, and cultural relevance while preserving program quality. Partners also receive consultation, evaluation tools, continuing education, and weekly Champion Notes that keep the organization's philosophy active throughout the year.
- **Sports Leadership Conference** - The annual Play Like a Champion Today Sports Leadership Conference at the University of Notre Dame brings together coaches, athletic administrators, educators, researchers, community leaders, and partners from across North America. Centered on connection, education, and inspiration, the conference strengthens the national network and creates opportunities for learning, collaboration, and donor and sponsor engagement.

The Opportunity

The Director of Development will be Play Like a Champion Today's first senior fundraising leader and a member of its Leadership Team. Reporting to the Executive Director, the Director will lead a national development strategy that diversifies revenue, deepens donor relationships, raises visibility, and builds the infrastructure for lasting philanthropic growth.

This is an opportunity for a builder. Play Like a Champion Today brings together a compelling mission, respected programs, long-standing partners, more than 500 past donors, powerful community stories, and an ambitious vision. The Director will unite these assets in a disciplined program spanning individual and major giving, foundations, corporate partnerships and sponsorships, recurring giving, campaigns, and events.

The Director will pair strategy with hands-on execution: cultivating and soliciting donors, creating annual and multi-year plans, strengthening systems and messaging, managing the donor pipeline, and equipping colleagues and volunteer leaders to fundraise confidently. From the outset, the Director will learn the programs and communities, build trust across a collaborative team, and translate Play Like a Champion Today's distinctive work into persuasive investment opportunities.

The strongest candidate will see Play Like a Champion Today as both a youth-sports organization and a broader catalyst for improving the lives of children in under-resourced communities by addressing poverty inequities through education, character development, mental health and well-being, faith and moral formation, community development, violence prevention, and equitable access. The Director will bring this full story to life for donors with varied interests and backgrounds.

Play Like a Champion Today's roots, history, and ministry programs remain central to its identity, while its partnerships span public, private, faith-based, and community settings. Experience in Catholic philanthropy is valued but not required. The Director will articulate the

organization's faith-informed values and engage effectively with religious and secular constituencies.

Essential Job Functions

Success in this role will require sound judgment, disciplined prioritization, and the ability to focus the organization's fundraising efforts where they can produce the greatest near- and long-term impact. The scope of the position is intentionally broad, but meaningful progress will require careful sequencing, clear priorities, and disciplined execution over time rather than attempting to transform every aspect of the development program at once.

The Director of Development is expected to begin by listening and learning—developing a strong understanding of Play Like a Champion Today's programs, partners, communities, donor history, organizational culture, and near-term financial priorities. From that foundation, the Director will assess the current development program, identify the opportunities most likely to produce sustainable results, and translate those findings into a focused and achievable fundraising plan.

Working in close partnership with the Executive Director, Leadership Team, Board, and other volunteer leaders, the Director will be empowered to strengthen fundraising strategy, systems, donor engagement, communications, and resource alignment. Success will require balancing collaboration with initiative, relationship building with accountability, and long-term program development with the practical need to generate measurable revenue.

The responsibilities below reflect the broad sequence of work anticipated for the role: first learning the organization and establishing a disciplined development foundation; then strengthening donor relationships, fundraising systems, and philanthropic messaging; and ultimately building a diversified and sustainable revenue program capable of supporting Play Like a Champion Today's continued growth and national impact.

Development Strategy and Leadership

- Create and lead a comprehensive annual and multi-year development strategy aligned with Play Like a Champion Today's mission, program priorities, growth plans, and financial goals.
- Serve as the organization's internal development expert and a strategic partner to the Executive Director, Leadership Team, Board, and community-based partners.
- Establish clear goals, performance measures, forecasts, and reporting practices that support accountability and informed decision-making.
- Build a culture of philanthropy in which staff, volunteer leaders, and participants understand their roles and are equipped to open doors, tell the story, cultivate relationships, and steward supporters.

Individual and Major Giving

- Assess and actively manage a portfolio of more than 500 past donors while identifying, qualifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding new prospects.
- Build a major-gifts program and create meaningful pathways for donors to increase and sustain their support.
- Design annual, seasonal, and special campaigns, including strategies for recurring and mid-level giving.
- Develop personalized cultivation and stewardship plans that connect donor interests with measurable mission impact in geographical areas and mission driven activities.

Institutional, Foundation, and Corporate Partnerships

- Partner with the Director of Research, Evaluation and Learning to identify philanthropic grant opportunities and develop persuasive proposals, reports, outcomes, and proof-of-concept materials.
- Identify and develop foundation, corporate, and philanthropic relationships that can support Play Like a Champion Today's national programs and targeted community initiatives.
- Create a corporate sponsorship strategy, including opportunities connected to the Sports Leadership Conference, educational programming, and community-based work.
- Cultivate local businesses and regional funders in affiliate communities and support community leaders in building sustainable local resource networks.

Brand, Communications, and Events

- Lead the fundraising and sponsorship strategy for signature events and evaluate events for donor acquisition, stewardship, conversion, and net revenue.
- Partner with colleagues to develop a clear and consistent case for support that connects Play Like a Champion Today's research, programs, stories, and impact.
- Guide development communications, including appeals, donor updates, annual reports, newsletters, campaign materials, social media fundraising, and recognition.
- Serve as a confident external ambassador who can represent Play Like a Champion Today with donors, foundations, corporate partners, dioceses, schools, sports leaders, and community organizations.

Development Operations

- Oversee Bloomerang CRM and ensure accurate donor records, gift processing, acknowledgments, moves management, reporting, and data-informed portfolio decisions.
- Develop policies, calendars, tools, and repeatable workflows that create a sustainable development operation.
- Manage development budgets and monitor progress toward revenue and activity goals.
- Work collaboratively across a small organization, contributing to organization-wide priorities and assuming related responsibilities as needed.

Measures of First Year Success

- Learn Play Like a Champion Today's programs, history, partners, communities, and culture; build trusted relationships with staff, Board members, donors, and local leaders.
- Complete an assessment of the donor base, fundraising history, systems, communications, and strongest near-term opportunities, then translate the findings into a practical development plan.
- Meet or exceed the initial annual fundraising baseline of approximately \$395,000, including stewarding pledged campaign support and generating new or renewed commitments.
- Establish a disciplined portfolio and moves-management process, engage current and lapsed donors, and begin building a qualified pipeline for major, foundation, and corporate support.
- Strengthen Play Like a Champion Today's case for support and clearly communicate the relationship among national education, community impact, and measurable outcomes for children.
- Create the foundation for a fundraising program that can grow with the organization over the next three to five years.

Qualifications

Experience and Capabilities

- A record of progressively responsible fundraising, business development, partnership development, or comparable relationship-based revenue generation, typically gained through at least five to seven years of relevant experience.
- Demonstrated success engaging, cultivating, and securing people and organizations of influence that result in five-figure or larger gifts, sponsorships, grants, or partnerships, and managing donors or prospects through a thoughtful relationship cycle.
- Experience building or significantly strengthening a development program, including strategy, systems, portfolios, communications, stewardship, and measurement.
- Ability to move comfortably between high-level planning and detailed execution in a small, entrepreneurial organization.
- Strong storytelling, writing, presentation, and interpersonal skills, with the ability to translate complex programs and research into a clear and motivating case for support.
- Experience using donor-management systems and data to guide cultivation, stewardship, forecasting, and reporting; experience with Bloomerang is helpful but not required.
- Bachelor's degree or an equivalent combination of education and professional experience, master's degree preferred. Advanced study or continuing professional education in fundraising, nonprofit leadership, communications, or a related field is welcomed.

Professional Attributes and Values

- Demonstrated altruism through deep commitment to expanding opportunities for children and to the role of sport, education, mentoring, and community in whole-child development.
- An authentic relationship builder who listens well, earns trust, shows appreciation, and follows through.
- Curious, self-aware, emotionally intelligent, and able to learn from colleagues, community leaders, donors, and partners with different perspectives and experiences.
- Collaborative and low-ego, with the confidence to lead, the judgment to know when to listen, and the maturity to share credit.
- Entrepreneurial, resourceful, organized, and accountable through business acumen; able to create structure without becoming rigid or overly process-driven.
- Comfortable working independently in a remote environment while remaining highly connected to colleagues and partners.
- Able to speak credibly about youth sports while seeing and communicating the mission beyond sport, including its educational, social, moral, spiritual, and community dimensions.
- Respect for Play Like a Champion Today's history, roots, and the ability to engage authentically with faith institutions and donors as well as secular schools, funders, and community organizations.
- Willingness and ability to travel for donor visits, partner engagement, the annual conference, staff gatherings, and other organizational priorities, and to work occasional evenings or weekends.

Leadership and Key Colleagues

Please do not contact the organization or its leaders directly.

F. Clark Power, EdD - Founder and Executive Director

Clark Power is one of the nation's leading thinkers in moral education and developmental psychology. He serves as Play Like a Champion Today's primary researcher and provides thought leadership for the organization's programs and public voice. He has served on the Board of the National Council for Accreditation of Coaching Education, the University of Notre Dame Faculty Board on Athletics, and the Association for Moral Education. A graduate of Villanova University and Harvard University, Clark joined the Notre Dame faculty in 1982 and is now Professor Emeritus.

Kristin Sheehan, MA - Associate Executive Director and Director of Community Impact

Kristin Sheehan has helped lead Play Like a Champion Today since its inception. She manages partner relationships, coordinates educational programs, leads community-impact work, and spearheads the development of new curricula. Kristin earned a bachelor's degree in theology and a master's degree in psychology from the University of Notre Dame, where she was also a varsity athlete. She has co-authored numerous articles and publications and has presented Play Like a Champion Today workshops across the country.

Peter Piscitello, MEd - Director of Operations

Peter Piscitello oversees business operations, works with partners around the country, and leads coach and parent workshops. He earned a bachelor's degree in business from Benedictine College and a master's degree in education from the University of Washington. Before joining Play Like a Champion Today, Peter worked in college athletics and served as Executive Director of a Catholic Youth Organization program.

Elaine Cassidy, PhD - Director of Research, Evaluation and Learning

Elaine Cassidy oversees strategy and projects related to research, evaluation, and learning. She is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and earned a master's degree in education and a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, where she has also taught as an adjunct instructor and worked as a program coordinator.

Reporting Relationships

The Director of Development reports to the Executive Director and serves as a member of the Leadership Team alongside the Associate Executive Director and Director of Community Impact, Director of Operations, and Director of Research, Evaluation and Learning. The position has no direct reports at launch and will work closely with Board members, volunteer leaders, and local affiliate partners.

Location and Travel

This is a remote position open to candidates residing in the continental United States. Play Like a Champion's headquarters is in Notre Dame, Indiana, and its partners and community initiatives are located across the country. The Director must be able to build relationships effectively in a virtual environment and travel for donor and partner meetings, fundraising events, the annual Sports Leadership Conference, staff gatherings, and other organizational priorities. Travel will be planned within the organization's annual budget.

Compensation and Benefits

The salary range for this position is \$100,000 to \$105,000. Play Like a Champion Today provides 20 paid personal days annually in addition to designated holidays. As a small nonprofit organization, Play Like a Champion Today does not currently provide medical, dental, retirement, or other employer-sponsored insurance benefits. Additional details regarding employment policies, pay schedules, holidays, and leave will be provided to candidates during the search process.

As a reflection of our firm's commitment to equity and equal pay for all, Cooper Coleman requires that salary ranges or salary starting points be published for every search we conduct. The practice of not posting salaries perpetuates the gender and racial wage gap and discriminates against women, people of color, and other historically excluded populations by causing individuals to negotiate from a disadvantaged starting point.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Play Like a Champion Today is committed to building a community in which people are treated with dignity and respect. The organization welcomes qualified candidates who share its commitment to children, inclusive opportunity, and positive youth development. Play Like a Champion Today is an equal opportunity employer and considers applicants without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable law.

Submission Instructions

Cooper Coleman is leading this search on behalf of Play Like a Champion Today. **To apply, please visit [this LINK](#).** All expressions of interest should be submitted through the online application.

Nominations of qualified candidates may be sent directly to:

J. Michael Durnil, PhD

michael.durnil@coopercoleman.com

Please use the position title as the subject line. All inquiries and nominations will be held in confidence.

A cover letter is not required with the initial application but is welcomed to help us understand a candidate's interest in and fit for the opportunity. Candidates invited to interview will be asked to provide a thoughtful letter of interest describing their relevant qualifications, desire to join Play Like a Champion Today, and connection to its mission.

Cooper Coleman is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all qualified candidates and will refer candidates without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or identity, age, disability, veteran status, or any other legally protected basis.

Background Checks and Credentials Verification

Before submitting your resume, please review it carefully for accuracy. Cooper Coleman verifies employment and academic credentials at the time of offer, and clients frequently conduct background checks before finalizing an offer.

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