

WEEK 1 TALKING POINTS:

Starting on the Right Foot



- Triple-Impact Competitors™ make themselves better, their teammates better and the game better by the way they compete.
- How you start an effort goes a long way toward the results you get. It's hard to recover from a bad start.
- Great athletes (and successful individuals in any arena) develop good habits that power them through the rough times that are inevitable. Habits for a season are often set in the first few weeks of practice. I'd like you to think hard about the kind of habits that you want to put in place for this season.
- An example is punctuality. Great competitors come early to practice to be ready exactly when practice starts. Can you commit to getting to practice on time every time?
- Triple-Impact Competitors bring the proper mindset to every practice. They think, "How can I make myself and my teammates better today?"
- When they are having a bad day they go through a get-ready ritual that puts them in the right frame of mind to work hard and achieve in practice. For example, you might say, "I'm having a bad day, but now I get to play my sport! I'm not going to let anything stop me from having a great practice today."
- Although it may seem far away now, the day will come when you will no longer be able to play your sport. You may look back and wish you could do it over again, but you won't be able to. What you can do is commit to giving your best to yourself, your team and your sport right now. If you do, you are likely to have no regrets about this season when you look back on it years from now.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- Can you commit to starting with good habits right now so they will carry you through the season?
- What are one or two things you could work on to develop good practice habits? Are you willing to commit to developing those habits?

WEEK 2 TALKING POINTS:

Teachable Spirit



- Sports is about more than winning on the scoreboard. It's about helping you become better people who will be successful in life after you are done with sports. We want you to fulfill your potential as individuals who will make the world a better place.
- The way we will do that is through helping you become Triple-Impact Competitors. A Triple-Impact Competitor makes himself better, his teammates better and the game better by the way he competes.
- Having a "teachable spirit" is the key to becoming a Triple-Impact Competitor. A Triple-Impact Competitor is a sponge.

A sponge absorbs all the liquid around it. We want you to develop a teachable spirit. We want you to always be looking to learn something new that can make you a better player and us a better team.

- The person with a teachable spirit is curious. We want you to be curious. If you don't know how to do something, WAG your way through it.
 - 1) **W**atch someone who knows how to do it.
 - 2) **A**sk someone to teach you or show you how.
 - 3) **G**et coaching. Ask someone to be your coach as you try to learn it.
- We want you to develop the habit of someone who is always hungry to learn and get better. That means developing the habit of having a Teachable Spirit.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

This week I want you to ask at least one question every practice. Let's start right now. Find a partner and share something that you want to learn to do better this week. Think of something you want to get better at and tell that to your partner.

- Who is willing to tell us what you want to learn this week?

WEEK 3 TALKING POINTS:

Emotional Tank



- Triple-Impact Competitors are not just thinking about themselves. They are always looking for ways to make their team better. A big way to make other people better is to fill their Emotional Tanks.
- An E-Tank is like the gas tank in a car. You can't drive very far with an empty tank and you can't play your best with an empty E-Tank. So if we have a team of players who fill each other's E-Tanks, we're going to play better than if we go around draining each other's Tanks.
- Some of the ways we fill E-Tanks include
 - √ Recognizing a great effort or accomplishment by a teammate.
 - √ Saying thanks when someone does something to help you or the team.
 - √ Supporting teammates who make mistakes and encouraging them to recover quickly to get ready for the next play.
 - √ Non-verbals such as high-fives, fist-bumps, pats on the back and smiles and eye contact with teammates.
- Learning to be a Tank-Filler rather than someone who goes around putting people down will make you a better person as well as a better teammate.
- The first few times you say something to fill someone's Tank, it may feel uncomfortable. But remember we talked about having a Teachable Spirit? If you have a Teachable Spirit, you stick with something – even if it makes you feel uncomfortable – until you master it.
- As coaches we're going to fill your Tanks as much as we can because we know that will make you a stronger team. But if we are going to be as great as we can be, it will take all of you filling each other's Tanks as well.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

This week I want you to look for ways to fill the E-Tanks of your teammates. Find a partner and talk about how you get your Tank filled.

- What ideas did you come up with for filling Tanks?

WEEK 4 TALKING POINTS:

Honoring the Game



- Triple-Impact Competitors compete by a code of Honoring the Game to actually make the game better. They win graciously and lose with dignity.
- The ROOTS of Honoring the Game are respect for
 - √ **Rules** – don't bend the rules to win, even if you can get away with it.
 - √ **Opponents** – a worthy opponent is a gift; we want to play fierce and friendly.
 - √ **Officials** – show respect even when we are confident they are mistaken.
 - √ **Teammates** – never embarrass our teammates, in or outside the game.
 - √ **Self** – live up to our own standards no matter what our opponents do.
- Winning seems so important in our society that many people forget to Honor the Game in the heat of the moment.
 - √ If they dishonor the game and get caught, as so often happens, they are embarrassed and wish they could do it over the right way.
 - √ If they dishonor the game and get away with it, the question is what value is winning if you violate your own standards to do so?
- On the other hand, if you play hard and live up to the ROOTS of Honoring the Game but lose on the scoreboard, you can hold your head high.
- Having one's own standards means you know how you want to behave regardless of what anyone else does. An opponent can talk trash, play dirty, bend the rules, but if you have integrity you act so you can be proud of yourself.
- We don't ever want to let our emotions get away from us and do something to make our team and our school look bad. We want to make our team, family, friends and community proud of us by Honoring the Game no matter what.
- Anyone can Honor the Game when their opponents do. It's a rare team that does it even when the opponent doesn't. That's the kind of team we want to be.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- What would you do if you lost a game and then a player from the other team said something insulting to you?
- Do you have the self-control to walk away or would you feel like you had to do something?
- How about if the official makes a bad call that loses the game for your team?

WEEK 5 TALKING POINTS:

Magic Ratio



- We talked before about how if we fill each others' Emotional Tanks, we will play better because people perform better when they have full E-Tanks.
- Triple-Impact Competitors make teammates better by filling their E-Tanks, so this week I want us to really focus on keeping E-Tanks filled.
- You may remember the idea of the Magic Ratio of 5 positives for every criticism. Research shows that people do best when they get about 5 tank-fillers for every criticism.
- This week I want you to really crank up the number of tank fillers you say to your teammates. 5:1 may seem like a hard ratio to reach but if you look for good things your teammates are doing, I know you can do it.
- Remember I don't want you making things up that aren't true. If a teammate is goofing off, I don't want you saying to him, "Way to go." So you have to look for true things that you can recognize people for. Perhaps someone is really working hard on a conditioning drill. Someone else may be showing another player how to do something. When you see teammates (or coaches!) doing things that help our team, tell them!
- Also the more specific you can be the better. "Great job!" is okay but it's better if you are specific with something like, "Way to hustle on defense!"
- Finally, look for teammates who are trying really hard. Effort is the key to success, so whenever you see teammates giving a great effort, let them know.
- So starting with today's practice, I want you to try to hit the 5:1 ratio.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- Do you think you will play better this week if you are getting your E-Tank filled?
- Where are some areas where you can be looking to fill the E-Tanks of your teammates this week?

WEEK 6 TALKING POINTS:

Plan A-B-C



- You've heard of being "in the zone?" When you are in the zone, you feel like you are able to play your best, things come easy.
- But the best athletes in the world are in the zone at most 15% of the time. So the question is what's happening to them the other 85% of the time?
- The answer is that they often have bad days just like the rest of us. The difference between the top athletes and the rest is that they work hard even when they are having a bad day. They work hard to make it a "good-bad day."
- Triple-Impact Competitors aren't in the zone all the time but they work hard when they are having a bad day to make it a good-bad day.
- We all have what you might call a Plan A. This is how we like to play our game. Plan A is how we normally approach a competition.
- But sometimes our Plan A doesn't work so well. Especially when we are having a bad day. On bad days, our Plan A doesn't do the job. That's why we need to have a Plan B to go to when Plan A isn't working.
- A good Plan B is always to focus on our effort. Maybe things are working out well and the bounces are going against us. But we can always keep working hard and making the effort. A good Plan B, when we are having a bad day, is to focus on hustling and making big efforts.
- If we make efforts it usually won't turn a bad day into a great day, but it might make a bad day a good-bad day!
- And a good-bad day is a lot better than a bad day. And it may lead to having a great day the next time out.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- How would you describe your Plan A? What might be your Plan B if Plan A isn't working so well?
- Are there ever times when Plan B also doesn't work and you need a Plan C?

WEEK 7 TALKING POINTS:

Window or Mirror?



- This week I want you to think about leadership. Triple-Impact Competitors are leaders who make people around them better and more productive. For us to be as good a team as we can be, we need everyone on the team to be a leader, to think about how to make each other better.
- If you want to be a leader, every time something happens to our team, you have the choice of looking through a window or a mirror.
- What do you see when you look through a mirror? You see yourself. What about when you look through a window? You see what is going on around you. You see what is happening to your teammates.
- When something goes *right*, a leader looks through a window and gives credit to those around him. When something goes *wrong*, a leader looks in a mirror and takes responsibility for his part in what went wrong.
- Most of the time a leader looks through a window because he is thinking about helping the team and you can't do that if you are just thinking about yourself.
 - √ If you are a leader and you get replaced in a game, think about how you can help the player who replaced you. You can't do that if you are looking into a mirror, feeling sorry for yourself.
 - √ If you are part of a great play, look through the window and congratulate all your teammates who helped make that play work.
- But there are times when you as a leader need to look in a mirror. When something goes wrong, a leader doesn't look to blame others. He looks in the mirror and takes responsibility. I love it when I see a player point to himself when he messes up – when he lets his teammates know that it was his mistake.
- There's an old saying: It's amazing how much we can accomplish if it doesn't matter who gets the credit. Let's focus this week on being leaders and get the window and mirror right.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- If you get replaced in a game, what are some things you can do to help your team from the sidelines? What can you do to help your replacement?
- Is it hard to look in a mirror when you mess up? Does it make it easier now that you know that that's what leaders do?

WEEK 8 TALKING POINTS:

High Road or Low Road?



- Being a Triple-Impact Competitor means responding to problems with a positive attitude rather than whining or complaining.
- Whining and complaining actually take a lot of energy, energy that could be used to deal with the situation.
- When something bad happens, like having to play or practice in really bad weather, you have the choice to take the High Road or take the low road. If you take the low road, you see every setback as a problem. You lose energy wishing it would be different than it is. You feel sorry for yourself.
- As a Triple-Impact Competitor you see setbacks as something that you can use. "This is not working out for me, but I am going to use it to make myself better. I'm going to take the High Road."
- When you take the High Road, you see the setback as a challenge. Triple-Impact Competitors embrace challenges and put their energy into figuring out how to deal with the situation rather than wishing it would go away.
- If you develop the habit of seeing setbacks as challenges, you will be much more successful than people who see them as problems. And you have more fun in life, because challenges can be fun.
- The key is taking the High Road and seeing setbacks as challenges rather than as problems.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- Everyone has things they would prefer to avoid. What are some aspects of playing your sport that are problems for you or things that you don't like to have to deal with? (Note: Facing the things that bother you is the first step in turning them into challenges.)
- Do you think you can take the High Road and turn them into challenges? What do you need to do to do that?

WEEK 9 TALKING POINTS:

Recommitting to Mastery



- The watchword of a Triple-Impact Competitor is “better.” A Triple-Impact Competitor is committed to getting better.
- This is the time in a season when people can get discouraged or just tired of working hard. The rest of our season depends on whether we commit to giving our best from here until the end.
- Remember the ELM Tree of Mastery where E stands for Effort, L for Learning and M for bouncing back from Mistakes. Research with Olympic athletes shows that athletes who focus on mastery win more medals than athletes who only focus on the scoreboard.
- Let’s talk about Effort. It’s not easy to give your best effort all season long. But that’s what it takes to be a Triple-Impact Competitor. Let’s remember how much we wanted the season to start before it did. Can we bring as much effort to the rest of our games as we did our first few games?
- And Learning. We talked about having a Teachable Spirit at the very beginning of the season. Sometimes people are eager to learn new things at the beginning of something but then they settle into a routine where they aren’t learning new things as the season goes along. Can we keep the Teachable Spirit alive and try to learn something new that will make us a better team every week throughout the entire season, right down to the last game?
- Mistakes tend to happen more when we are tired. That’s one reason we need to keep our enthusiasm and energy up. And, if we can remember to flush mistakes and bounce back quickly, it will help us end the season with a bang!

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- Do you feel your energy getting lower as the season goes along?
- Do you think you can recommit to ending the season with the same level of commitment as you had at the beginning?
- Of the E (Effort), the L (Learning and improvement) and M (bouncing back from Mistakes), which one seems the most important for you to focus on?

WEEK 10 TALKING POINTS:

Parking Mistakes



- Triple-Impact Competitors are able to bounce back quickly from mistakes using a mistake ritual like flushing mistakes down the drain.
- When you focus on a mistake you are not in the moment ready for the next play. If you beat yourself up for making a mistake you are hurting your team because you have taken yourself out of the game. You are more likely to make another mistake if you keep beating yourself up.
- However, mistakes have much to teach us so we don't want to forget them completely. We just want to forget them in the moment so we can keep playing hard.
- That's where the Mistake Parking Lot comes in. You put the mistake in the parking lot until after the game.
- It's like driving to a movie or to get something to eat. You don't take the car into the theater or restaurant with you. It would mess everything up, just like keeping the mistake with you in a game will mess up your play from then on.
- But you remember where the parking spot is so after the movie or meal you go to pick the car up for the ride home. After the game you want to revisit your mistake to try to understand what you have to do to avoid that mistake in the future.
- Ask yourself some questions: Was I out of position? Did I lose my focus for a moment? Is there something I could have done to make that play that I need to work on this coming week?
- Or, did the other team or player just make a great play? Sometimes you do everything right but you get beat anyway. Once you have figured out what the problem was, you can develop your plan to address the mistake the next week.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- Can you add the Parking Lot idea to the Flush to help you in the rest of your season?
- Is there a mistake you made recently that you want to analyze to see how you could learn from it to get better?

WEEK 11 TALKING POINTS:

Teachable Spirit Revisited



- The first trait of a Triple-Impact Competitor is having a Teachable Spirit.
- One's Teachable Spirit is easy to get in touch with early in the season when the possibilities are endless. It's harder to focus on late in the season. However, there is as much to learn late in the season as early. A Triple-Impact Competitor has staying power and continues to learn throughout the season.
- Having a Teachable Spirit means that you can salvage something useful from any situation. If someone gets angry with you, you examine the criticism to see what you can learn from it. And you try to understand why this person is angry so you learn what sets him or her off in the future.
- There is a natural set of steps everyone has to go through to learn a new skill:
 - 1st: Unconscious Incompetence:** You don't know how to do something but you don't know that you don't know so you are satisfied. Ignorance is bliss.
 - 2nd: Conscious Incompetence:** Here you have learned that you don't know how to do something and it is unpleasant. People who don't have a strong Teachable Spirit often quit at this stage because they don't like feeling uncomfortable.
 - 3rd: Conscious Competence:** Here you know how to do something but you must concentrate to be able to do it. If you lose concentration, you will fail to do it.
 - 4th: Unconscious Competence:** Now you can do the skill without having to think about it all the time. This is a very fun place for an athlete to be and a Teachable Spirit helps you get to here.
- The other thing about having a Teachable Spirit is that it is FUN to learn new things. And it's fun to be able to do something new that you couldn't do before.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- What are the top one or two things you have learned already this season?
- What one or two things can you focus on to get better at in the last weeks of the season?
- Can you commit to engaging your Teachable Spirit for the rest of the season so you can end the season with a flourish?

WEEK 12 TALKING POINTS:

End With A Flourish



- Triple-Impact Competitors have staying power. As the end of the season approaches there is a tendency to let up, but a Triple-Impact Competitor works hard to End with a Flourish.
- Ending with a Flourish means playing with as much enthusiasm as you had when you started the season. It means making the extra effort – leaving it all out there – to make good things happen for your team as the season ends.
- This season will end soon and become part of your personal history. Even if you return to the team next year, it will be a different experience with different people. So take the time to really be present and ENJOY it while you can.
- Look around during practice. See what your teammates and coaches are doing. Try to stay hyper aware of what is going on around you and work hard in practice and in games.
- Take time to thank your coaches and teammates who have helped you during the season. Expressing appreciation to people who have helped you is a big part of being a Triple-Impact Competitor and fills the E-Tanks of teammates, which makes them better.
- Try to burn this experience into your memory so you will look back on it as you mature into adulthood feeling like you gave it everything you had.
- Ending with a Flourish is a way of saying “Thank you” to your teammates, your coaches, the season, and the experience itself.
- In the years to come, as you look back on this season your feelings about it can be positive or negative or both. But if you make the effort to End with a Flourish, you will be able to look back with no regrets knowing you did everything you could to make it a memorable season.

Reflection-Discussion Topics

- How will you feel about this season in the years to come?
- Will you feel better about it if you make the effort to End with a Flourish?
- What are one or two things you can do to help you and your team End with a Flourish?