Can character be taught thru high school athletic programs? If so, how?

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What athletic moment or accomplishment do you treasure most?

Championship, honor, team success, individual accomplishment?
Why is this important?

- Wisconsin State Athletic Association sportsmanship challenge
- N. Carolina SA physical negates state championship
- Tennessee hazing leads to AD/Coach charged
- Indiana HS girls basketball teams fight, teams lose remaining season
- North Virginia HS boys basketball program sexual assault
- Pennsylvania HS boys basketball coach head butts referee
- Minnesota HS state association transgender policy ignite controversy
- Mississippi HS girls basketball coach physically attacked by a parent
- Florida AD and head football coach arrested on domestic battery charge
My world upside down

WE SHALL NOT CEASE FROM EXPLORATION,
AND THE END OF ALL OUR EXPLORING
WILL BE TO ARRIVE WHERE WE
STARTED AND KNOW THE PLACE
FOR THE FIRST TIME.
- TS ELIOT
Do you believe that sport participation in and of itself builds character?
John Wooden, former UCLA head basketball coach

Sport does not build character, it reveals it.
To educate a man in mind without character, is to educate a menace to society.
NFHS Coaches Education
Coaches Expectations

- Communication/Relational expertise
- Technical expertise
- Tactical Expertise
- Managerial Expertise
- Proven Builder of moral character
Socrates

An unexamined life is not worth living
Reflective Practice in the coaching profession

“Contemplation, silence, solitude, and centeredness are critical to the InSideOut work required of a transformational coach. Unfortunately, our coaching culture discourages contemplation. Part of the problem is the pace of our seasons. In sports’ masculinity formula, contemplation is seen as weak, too intellectual, too soft. Another part of the problem is our internal resistance to facing the scary stuff inside (ourselves) that we either don’t want to see or are afraid to see.”
A place to start reflecting

- Reflect upon these questions and write down your answers
  - Why do I coach?
  - Why do I coach the way I do?
  - What does it feel like to be coached by me?
  - How do I define success?
Essential to character development

1. Self-awareness
2. Efforts to improve
3. Evaluation of our progress
What do I want to do with the rest of my life? (March 2014)

1. Write a book for HS athletic directors. The Athletic Director Survival Guide
2. Earn my PhD in Sport Pedagogy an Character Ed.
3. Start a consulting company to Ads/Coaches
"[m]etaphysical understanding must precede ethical prescription. Anyone who claims that it is morally wrong to break game rules intentionally, or mistreat an umpire, or gloat over a game victory, must first know what a game is and also that rule breaking, umpire harassment, and victorious gloating are germane to that setting and potentially (or actually) harmful in that place." ... It is rather that they... have a clear understanding of what sport is before attempting to apply precepts of love, or of justice, or of whatever, to it." (Kretchmar, 1984)
Non-Moral or Social Values Defined

Usually, non-moral values are objectively quantifiable and highly regarded because of the benefits they bring. Examples of non-moral values include money, fame, glory, power, prestige, and winning.
Moral Character Development Defined

Character on the other hand, has to do with how the agent/individual portrays the moral value. A person with character is one who believes and lives by a certain set of moral values. Character building thus refers to developing specific moral values, ie. moral development.
# Non-Moral/Social Values vs. Moral Character

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Moral or Social Values</th>
<th>Moral Character</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
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<td>Sacrifice</td>
<td>Fortitude</td>
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<td>Work ethic</td>
<td>Beneficence</td>
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<td>Being on time</td>
<td>Justice</td>
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<td>Fitness</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Respect</td>
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The problem is..........

When we make moral decisions based on non-moral or social values
How do we teach sport skills effectively?

- In the daily practice plan
- Understand skills for refinement
- Routine
- Differentiate instruction
- Team wide commitment
- Practical not philosophical
- Entire coaching staff engaged in the process
How can moral character be taught effectively?

- Modeling
- Education
- Environment
Modeling

- Cannot say one thing and do another as a Coach/AD
- FB sidelines as an example
- Foul language cannot be used by coaches and corrected when used by athletes
- Behavior desired must be lived out clearly
- Entire staff on board, can’t have individuals go odd ball and expect student athletes to get it.
- Must be practical, shoe leather examples of follow through
Education

- In your athletic department mission statement
- Signage in your facility (locker rooms/gyms)
- Part of practice focused on your core team covenants
- Coaches meetings, focus of instruction
- Share moral development stories with each other
- Bring in a speaker to begin your development of this in your program
- Coaches retreat to focus on this annually
- Read one of the attached resources together
How high on your list is a commitment to moral character when you hire new coaches.

Is moral character development part of your evaluation of coaches?

Do you tolerate aberration of behavior by coaches and student athletes?

How are YOU leading your athletic program toward a stronger commitment to moral character development?

Zero tolerance for hazing, team rule breaking and bad moral behavior. No more “boys will be boys” attitudes.
Transformational Coaching
with Joe Ehrmann

“What would happen if teacher-coaches were held accountable to deliver lesson plans on responsible decision-making and self-management? What if coaches taught the virtue of community? What would happen if coaches all across America caught hold of a vision of transforming sports as we know them, so sports could transform young men and women who could then transform society?”

From Pgs. 160-161 InSideOut Coaching, Joe Ehrmann
We must do more on purpose than teach sport skills well

“We should make a concerted effort to develop moral reasoning skills to the same extent and effort as we do motor skills, strategy and tactics.”

Lumpkin, Stoll, Beller  Sport Ethics: Applications for Fair Play p.263
Now What?

To every person there comes in their lifetime that special moment when they are figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered a chance to do a very special thing, unique to them and fitted to their talents. What a tragedy if that moment finds them unprepared or unqualified for that which would be their finest hour—Winston Churchill
To continue the dialogue

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Resources for future study

The Athletic Director
SURVIVAL GUIDE

Kevin M. Bryant, CMFAA
Resources for Future study
Resources for Future Study

- **Sport Ethics:** Applications for Fair Play
  - Authors: Angelo Lumpkin, Sharon Kay Stoll, Jennifer M. Beller

- **InSide Out COACHING:** How Sports Can Transform Lives
  - Author: Joe Ehrmann
  - With Paula Ehrmann and Gregory Jordan