

The 8 Roles of Team Leadership

Making the Team: The 8 Roles of Teamwork

A role is a mixture of responsibilities and expectations either informally or formally designed. A role is intended to clarify a set of expectations and an arrangement of interdependent behaviors. Somewhere in **The 8 Roles of Teamwork** each player will find aspects closely aligned with their disposition and personal preferences. Roles stimulate internal motivation by investing the athlete with direction and intensity of thoughts, feelings, and outcomes.

Here's a short introduction you can use to get your players started on building a high-performing team:

“Search for a small role in which you feel comfortable walking and talking the part. This role should be in alignment with who you are. Select a social role you can easily engage in while meshing with others playing their different, but supporting roles.”

The Academy for Sport Leadership's teamwork system promotes a learning-centered culture based on commitment and collaboration. The most important effect in the early phases of team development is learning how to assemble the eight roles and clarify expectations. Once the eight roles are mobilized and student-athletes are performing deliberate acts of leadership you will have effectively built a leadership system for this particular team. The leadership system at its most basic level is there to guide student-athletes to build trust, respect, and commitment with each other, inspiring one another to take the initiative to do the right thing.

A role is an assortment of responsibilities and expectations embedded in a formal or informal social position. Within the **8 Roles of Teamwork** every student-athlete will find aspects that are more closely aligned with their disposition and preferences. They will find a consequential role (see chart below) in which they feel comfortable to walk and talk the part. The athlete will find this role to be in alignment with who they are and thus easily engage the role, meshing with teammates playing their different, but supporting roles. Once an athlete masters their initial role, they'll seek another role allowing them to enlarge their contributions to the team.

4 Dimensions of Teamwork Performance	4 Activity Roles	4 Adaptive Roles
Physical	Grinder	Enforcer
Intellectual	Teacher	Advisor
Emotional	Energizer	Resonator
Social	Helper	Connector

The 8 Roles provide members a secure sense of their place on the team. Student-athletes reap the benefits of *autonomy and belonging* when grounded in a team-based role. In fact, role play grants every player a non-threatening entry into the formal leadership development process. The practice of role play reveals that each role consists of a flow of activities to enact, one way or another, while social norms will develop around how these functions are carried out. Because roles aren't simply job descriptions on paper, they encourage experimentation.