

Notes: This is a case study created by The Academy for Sport Leadership for use with its leadership development programs. Each case can be facilitated by a coach or student-athlete. The desired outcome is that the team members learn how to talk together and how to solve problems through skillful conversation. This sample is for the *Coaching for Leadership Masterclass*.

Big “We,” little “me”

Thinking and Acting Like a Committed Teammate

Introduction

Erin arrived late to her first class of the day. She was still brooding about not playing in last night’s game. Consumed with disappointment in her coaches, teammates, and herself, Erin was contemplating quitting the team. She reflected on the hours upon hours invested over the past two years simply to eke out a few minutes of playing time each game. She’d set high goals for herself, and she met most of them. She improved in the weight room and on the playing field. She always gave all she had in practice and the coaches were usually pleased with her as a member of the team. However, she seemed to be stuck on starting. Playing time. Seemed little else mattered to her. She wasn’t quite sure why she felt this way, she’d always thought of herself as a very good teammate. She enjoyed working alongside everyone, had no grudges and couldn’t muster a bad word about her teammates. She just wanted to play. And she’d just realized after last night’s game she really wouldn’t get much playing time this year—her senior season.

Questions for Discussion

- Why might a team member become discouraged about a lack of playing time?
- How can you encourage teammates to balance “Me” with “We?”
- How might you unknowingly discourage a teammate from accepting “we?”
- How might Erin’s thoughts determine her behavior?
- What happens when one team member goes in his or her own direction?
- What might happen when a team member places too much emphasis on themselves?
- What are the benefits of being a member of a team? (physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially)
- What “rewards” might a player receive that doesn’t get much playing time?

What’s at Stake?

While we all have to take responsibility for ourselves and our success in life, we need to do so in a way that honors the various wholes of which we are a part. Thinking and acting “BIG We, little me” is not about denying yourself, your needs, or your individuality. It is about realizing that you are part of a whole that is greater than you.

Point to Ponder

A famous proverb states, “The best potential in ‘me’ is ‘we.’”