



Coaching Scripts

PCA has developed coaching scripts around our three main principles. A script is just what it sounds like: a set of statements and vocabulary that a coach can use in practices and games to begin conversations with players. Scripts shouldn't be memorized and recited word-for-word. They should simply be considered examples of how you might talk with your players. Read through the scripts, and then put the ideas into your own language.

Scripts for PCA's Three Principles—

1. Honor the Game
2. Redefine "Winner"
3. Fill the Emotional Tank

Honor the Game Script

Here is an example from a lacrosse coach's practice—

I love the game of lacrosse, and I hope you do too. Lacrosse has a long history and is the fastest game on two feet. A lot of great things happen on the lacrosse floor. I feel that it is an honor to be involved in the sport. That's why I want to talk to you about Honoring the Game. Now, I am sure many of you have had parents or coaches talk to you about sportsmanship, or what it means to be a "good sport." What does it mean to you to be a good sport? (Answers may include "play fair," "don't cheat" etc.) Sportsmanship is important, but in order to get the most out of this lacrosse season, I want you to honor the game. We say that Honoring the Game goes to the ROOTS of the matter: R-O-O-T-S. Each letter in ROOTS stands for an important part of lacrosse that we must respect. The R stands for Rules. The first O is for Opponents. The next O is for Officials. T is for Teammates, and the S is for Self.

R is for Rules

The rules of lacrosse are what allow us to keep the game fair. Respect for the rules is important, even when it's possible to break them without getting caught. I want you to play by the rules, even if you think you won't get caught if you break them. Breaking the rules dishonors the game, even if it means that we win.

O is for Opponents

Without opponents, we could have no game. A good opponent makes us do our best. Sometimes your opponents are friends of yours. I want you to respect your opponents, and remember they are out there to have fun just like us. I want you to try your hardest to win, not because you hate your opponent, but because you want to play your best. I promise that I will show respect for opposing coaches and teams, and I expect you to do the same.

O if for Officials

It is very important to respect officials. Often, this can be the most difficult part of Honoring the Game, so we need to remember to keep it as a focus when we play. Officials have been selected and trained to enforce rules, and they have a very hard job. Without the officials the game would be unsafe and unfair. Officials are not perfect (just like coaches, athletes and parents!) and sometimes make mistakes. However, there is no excuse for treating officials with disrespect when they make errors. I want you to show respect for officials, even when you disagree with the call. I promise to do the same thing.

T is for Teammates

A big part of lacrosse is the team. Being with your teammates should be fun. Later in life you will often be part of a team, and it is important to learn to work together. I hope you feel a commitment to each other as teammates and that you will agree to always play as hard as you can in practice and in games. Please encourage and support each other on and off the playing field.

S is for Self

Some people only Honor the Game when their opponents do, but I want us to Honor the Game no matter what the other team or its fans do. I want us to be the kind of team that Honors the Game even when others do not because we set our own personal standards. And we live up to them no matter what. We have respect for ourselves and would never do anything to dishonor the game.

So what do we mean when we say that Honoring the Game goes to the ROOTS of the matter? Respect for : Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates, and Self. If you do these five things, you are Honoring the Game. You and your teammates will get the most out of our season, and you will join the great tradition that is lacrosse. Now let's Honor the Game starting right now at this practice, especially when we scrimmage.

Who can give me an example of how we Honor the Game of lacrosse?
What does each letter stand for?

Redefining "Winner" Script

Here is an example from a lacrosse coach's practice—

Lacrosse is a great game. It's a lot of fun to play, and it's also a way that we learn important lessons that can help us later in life. I know that I learned a lot from playing competitive sports when I was your age.

I want to tell you about a goal I have for the team and for each of you individually this season. It's called "Act like a winner to be a winner."

There are two kinds of winners. What is one kind of winner? What does "winner" mean to you? (Answer likely to be something like "The one who has the most points at the end of the game.")

One kind of winner is the team that has the most points at the end of the game. And we want to be that kind of winner. We want to work as hard as we can to win as many games as we can.

There is another kind of winner though that is just as important. That is a winner in life.

We want to learn from this season how to be a winner in everything we do, not just lacrosse.

To be a winner we need to start acting like a winner. And a winner is someone who is working for mastery of whatever activity he or she is doing. So in lacrosse we want to work toward mastery to be the best lacrosse player and team we can be. And we want to learn how to achieve mastery at anything we want to be good at.

To help understand the way that we achieve mastery, we use the example of a tree that we call the Tree of Mastery. If you climb the Tree of Mastery you will be successful.

We say that the Tree of Mastery is an **ELM** tree because there are three things you need to do to climb the Tree of Mastery:

E is for **Effort**. We want to give our best effort every time we come out on the field. I am more concerned that we try our hardest than I am if we win. We could win against a weak team without giving it our best effort, and that doesn't really mean anything.

On the other hand we could play a team that was stronger than we are and try our very hardest and lose. I would be proud of us in that case because we were acting

like a winner by trying our hardest even though the other team ended up winning the game.

So the first part of the ELM tree is E for Effort.

L is for Learning. We want to continue learning and improving every week in practice and every time we play a game. If we continue to learn, we will get better, and that is more important than whether or not we are better than some other team.

We could be better than another team without learning and improving if that team is a weak team. And we could be weaker than another team but be learning a lot and getting better all the time. It's more important to me that we learn and improve than it is to beat a team that isn't very good. And it's more important that we learn and improve even if we lose to a team that is stronger than we are.

So the second part of the ELM tree is L for Learning.

M is for Mistakes. Most people think it's bad to make a mistake. But mistakes are part of the learning process. You can't learn something as complicated as lacrosse if you are afraid to make a mistake. And people that are afraid to make a mistake often don't even try very hard.

I want you to know that it is okay to make a mistake on this team. We want to learn from our mistakes and not let them discourage us or keep us from working hard. So, is it okay to make a mistake on this team?

Yes, it is. And the third part of the ELM tree is M for it's okay to make a Mistake.

Acting like a winner involves three things. It means:

1. Giving your best effort every time,
2. Continuing to learn and improve, and
3. Not letting mistakes (or fear of making a mistake) stop you.

If you do these three things, you are acting like a winner, and you will be a winner in life as well as lacrosse.

Now let's go have a great practice. Give it your best effort, learn as much as you can, and don't worry about making a mistake.

Oh, before we go, what kind of a tree is the Tree of Mastery? What does each letter stand for?

Fill the Emotional Tank

Here is an example from a lacrosse coach's practice-

Have you ever heard of the home team advantage? How often do you think a team wins on its home floor? It turns out that a team wins at home a lot more than when they are away. One reason for this is the emotional support of the fans. It tends to lift our emotions and make us play better.

We want to be able to play our best all of the time. To play our best we have to keep our "Emotional Tanks" full. What is an emotional tank? Well, it is like a gas tank in a car. When it is full, we run well, but when it is empty, we can't go very far.

Why is it important that we keep each other's tanks full? If our emotional tank is empty, we become negative, and we give up easier. If our tanks are full, however, we are optimistic and are able to handle difficult situations. As the coach, I will do my best to help fill your emotional tanks. To have a really great season, I need your help.

Think about when you miss a open net. What would someone say to make you feel worse? "Nice job (sarcastically)," "You stink!" See, that was easy. We call that draining the emotional tank. When you criticize or insult your teammates, you make them feel worse. That's why we call it draining the emotional tank. I will try not to drain your emotional tank, but sometimes I will have to correct you to help you learn the game. I will try to do this in a way that keeps your emotional tank full.

What would someone say to make you feel better after you missed a shot. ("Get the next one," "Shake it off!") We call that filling the emotional tank. Here are some ways to fill the emotional tank:

Tell your teammate when you see him do something well, or when you see him giving his maximum effort, even if he does not make the play.

Tell him when you see him improving. This will make him want to continue trying hard to improve even more.

Listen to your teammates. If your teammate has an idea he wants to share, you can fill his tank by listening to what he has to say. No one wants to be ignored.

I promise to do all of these things. Also, I want you to do tank-filling activities with each other.

Here is a great way that you can help me. It is called the Buddy System. Once in a while at practice, I'll ask you to pair up with a buddy. It might be a different buddy every time. I want you to look for the things that your buddy is doing well. Remember, though, you have to be truthful, or else it won't mean anything. Also, try to tell your buddies exactly what they did right. If your buddy makes a nice pass, say "Good pass! Way to put it right on the stick."

Do you think it is important to say more positives than negatives? How many more positives should you say? I am going to try to shoot for five positives for every negative. I don't want you to worry about the exact number of positives you say, just remember, be as positive as you can.

So, right now, pair up with someone else, and he will be your buddy for today's practice. Later in the practice, I am going to have each one of you report back to the team on what your buddy said to you to fill your tank.

This season is going to be an especially great season if we support each other and keep our emotional tanks full. With full emotional tanks, we will be off to the races, and there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

Now, who can tell me some ways to fill each other's emotional tanks?

