

LAKER SOCCER: Multiple levels of competitive teams where the players enjoy themselves, work hard, and have a desire to improve. Players support each other relentlessly because they love their team and enjoy being around each other. Coaches hold players accountable, help them learn, challenge them, provide them opportunities to problem solve, and support them every step along the way. There's a mutual respect between players, coaches, administration, opposition, officials, and parents and we enjoy every opportunity we have because ultimately we know the lessons learned are more important than the result. Teams are selected, and although players have aspirations of being on certain teams, ultimately they play because they love playing and choose to grab a hold of the opportunity and own it. Everyone realizes that there will be ups and downs, but these are attacked head on with open minds and honest discussion. Players drive the culture of the program because they enjoy being a part of something bigger than a result or bigger than a mark on a stat sheet. Players support other programs, and other programs support us. Everyone feels a part of something...and man...does that feel good!

SO...HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Part I. In my opinion, WE START BY BEING GOOD PEOPLE.

Many, if not all, of the things mentioned above require VULNERABILITY, which isn't easy in today's world. However, it's a lot easier to take a chance when you know the others are doing the same. People willing to take chances will drive improvement and positive change – and more people will be willing to take chances if they know they have the support of those around them. To make a difference, you need others around; to get others around, you need to gain their TRUST; to gain their TRUST...start back at the beginning and focus on being a good person. Would you rather play with someone that treats you well, supports you, and takes the time to get to know you, or someone that's showing off and just telling others what to do? Act accordingly.

When you are together, SUPPORT EACH OTHER. Redefine what's "cool". Make it cool to work hard; make it cool to care. Care about how you're doing. Care about how your teammates are doing – as people. The bond you form on and off the field will be what you ultimately remember, so make it cool to be together and recognize how great it is when others are willing to give their all with you around.

Give it your all every day, and remember failure is inevitable – more importantly, remember that the reaction to failure is completely in your control. FAILURE IS OK, AS LONG AS WE LEARN FROM IT. Go for it, and if it doesn't work...learn...adjust...and go for it again! This is your CHARACTER, and your CHARACTER makes you great – that's who you are...soccer is just something you do.

For the group to be successful, players have to BE WILLING TO PUT THE TEAM FIRST. For us, this starts with MAKING GOOD DECISIONS. Players need to be willing to think about the choices they make and how those choices will impact the team. How can they operate in a way that helps the team function at high level? What are they willing to do to help their team? Are you willing to SERVE OTHERS? What does that even mean? Could be...carrying the gear to the field, cleaning up the bus/locker room, using some free time to go cheer on members of another team, cheering from the sideline as they wait for their opportunity to give their all. Start with the basics. Lead by example, and lead by lifting others. BE A GOOD PERSON!

**Acknowledge and respect the work that previous players have put in to building the program into what it is.
At the same time, ask yourself...WHAT IMPACT WILL YOU HAVE?**

BETTER PEOPLE – BETTER LEADERS – BETTER LAKERS