

CHAMPION ATHLETE'S LITTLE INSTRUCTION BOOK

By Jon Unger

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- #1 Nod to your coach when you understand what he/she is saying, whether you agree with him/her or not.
- #2 Always be the first to congratulate a teammate when he/she makes a successful play.
- #4 Never criticize a teammate.
- #5 Always help a teammate up who has fallen to the ground.
- #6 Get in the best condition you possibly can so that you can perform at your highest level with your greatest confidence.
- #7 Always chase after balls going out of bounds.
- #8 Never express disappointment towards or argue with an official.
- #9 Treat every practice as if it's a championship game.
- #10 Never underestimate an opponent.
- #11 Never quit in the middle of a play and never give up before a game is over.
- #12 Always know the score and how much time is left in a period.
- #14 Visualize yourself making successful plays.
- #15 Keep in mind that truly great players make the players around them better.
- #16 Write thank-you notes to coaches at the end of the season.
- #18 Be an extra pair of eyes for your teammates -- talk on the field.
- #19 Be an active watcher when you watch your sport on tv -- pay close attention to how the best players play (especially those who play your position).
- #22 Never dwell on a mistake in the middle of a game -- you may miss your opportunity to make up for it.
- #26 "Be quick but don't hurry." (John Wooden)
- #30 Never stop thinking of ways and experimenting with ways to make tiny improvements in your game.
- #36 Never intentionally try to hurt an opponent.
- #37 Get up as quickly as you possibly can after getting knocked down
- #38 Get to practice early.

- #40 Do sit-ups daily -- conditioning starts in the stomach.
- #41 Take care of your class work.
- #42 Get at least 8 hours of sleep every night.
- #44 Come up with and use well-meaning nicknames for your teammates.
- #47 Set up and play in pick-up games in the off-season -- play for keeps every time.
- #48 Keep in mind that no coach will ever cut the hardest working player on the field or court.
- #49 Make your weaknesses your strengths.
- #50 Keep an athletic journal.
- #51 Write down a list of goals -- check it and update it every once in a while.
- #52 Do not make excuses.
- #53 Never put down an opponent -- before, during, or after a game (especially to the media).
- #55 Never talk back to the person who washes your uniforms.
- #56 Experiment with something new whenever you play a pick-up game.
- #57 Never let the weather prevent you from practicing.
- #59 Play with kids who are older and better than you.
- #61 Ask your coach questions.
- #62 Know the rules of your game inside-out.
- #63 Pay attention when your coach is talking -- you should look him/her in the eyes.
- #64 Be grateful for the opportunity to be a player -- it's a privilege, not a right, and so many people would love to be in your shoes.
- #65 When running sprints, always touch the line and run through the finish.
- #66 Be modest.
- #67 Say "thank you" when a fan gives you praise.
- #69 Be alert for loose balls.
- #70 Play hard until you hear the whistle.
- #71 Always believe you can win.
- #73 Run on and off the field.
- #74 Care more about the team's performance than your personal performance.

- #76 Get a personal pre-game routine.
- #77 Realize that it's better to play well and lose to a stronger opponent than to play poorly and defeat a weaker one.
- #78 Pursue excellence, not results -- the results will follow.
- #79 There is no such thing as a "gimme" -- never take anything for granted.
- #81 Attend your friends' and schoolmates' games.
- #83 Don't take coaching as criticism.
- #84 Learn from your mistakes.
- #88 Always drink lots of water.
- #93 Know the responsibilities of each position on the field.
- #96 Know the scouting report.
- #103 Pass the ball to the side away from the defense.
- #110 Learn proper technique as early as possible.
- #111 Take pride in your defense.
- #112 Be enthusiastic -- it's contagious.
- #113 Work hard on your ability to score during the off-season.
- #114 Lead by example.
- #115 Find a (windowless) wall to practice on.
- #117 Keep your head up.
- #120 Be willing to take the last shot.
- #123 Understand that the type of shoes you wear doesn't make you a good athlete.
- #124 Do it now because you won't want to do it later.
- #128 Watch game tape looking for ways to improve.
- #130 Know when to be serious.
- #131 Try to make your teammates look good.
- #132 Compliment your coach.
- #134 Wink or smile at a teammate when the game is at its most critical moment.
- #136 Go the extra mile...literally.
- #137 Have interests outside of athletics.

- #138 Organize team activities outside of the sport.
- #140 Be consistent.
- #141 Learn how to play numbers down offensively and defensively.
- #142 Learn how to play numbers up offensively and defensively.
- #143 Become a complete player.
- #144 Play your best at whatever position the coach puts you.
- #145 Know your role on the team.
- #146 Accept your role on the team.
- #147 Look for ways to improve your team's chemistry.
- #148 Keep in mind that there's no "I" in team.
- #149 Learn the history of your sport.
- #150 Hang with the good crowd.
- #151 Don't ever think that you are better than you are.
- #152 Don't brag about your team especially before the season is over.
- #153 Know what you are capable of doing.
- #154 Know your limitations.
- #155 Make up your own unique conditioning drills.
- #156 Try to get a little better every day.
- #157 Don't be afraid to fail.
- #159 Imagine your team winning the championship game.
- #162 Remember that a 10,000 mile journey begins with the first step.
- #163 Believe in miracles, but don't depend on them.
- #164 Earn your teammates' respect.
- #165 Be tough.
- #166 Show class.
- #167 Follow all shots -- on offense and defense.
- #169 Always be willing to try a new technique, play, or skill.
- #170 Realize that nothing comes easy.

- #171 Be happy that nothing comes easy.
- #172 Understand that the harder you work at something, the more difficult it is to surrender.
- #173 Don't overestimate your opponent.
- #175 Stretch.
- #176 Lift weights with correct form.
- #177 Know that somewhere someone is working harder than you.
- #178 Dream big dreams.
- #180 Teach your sport to somebody.
- #181 Make efforts to make your teammates who play the least feel like important members of the team.
- #182 Create a team celebratory dance.
- #183 Learn how to play with every part of your body.
- #184 Find a role model..
- #185 Visualize yourself being successful right before falling asleep.
- #186 Don't ever play for money (i.e. don't bet on your games).
- #188 Strive to be an "overachiever."
- #192 Don't be jealous of other people's success -- try to learn from it.
- #193 Do first what you want to do least.
- #194 Don't stand still.
- #195 Be quick to convert from offense to defense when your team loses the ball.
- #197 When talking to the press, compliment your teammates and your opponents.
- #198 Thank those who help you.
- #199 Have a killer instinct.
- #200 Bury an opponent while you can.
- #203 Be ready before your opponent is.
- #204 See the entire field.
- #206 Compete in everything you do.
- #207 Watch the Olympics.
- #208 Watch the celebration when a team or individual wins a championship.

- #209 Find a way to make plays.
- #210 Learn how to make plays on defense as well as offense.
- #211 Ask someone more experienced and/or talented than you how to do something -- that is, learn from people better than you.
- #212 Know the phone number of your coach and all your teammates.
- #213 Call somebody if you are at all uncertain about what time to be at a practice or a game.
- #214 Watch highlights of your sport.
- #215 Never say "I can't" -- instead, say "I can't...yet."
- #218 Work on your ability to stop and change direction.
- #219 Work on your acceleration.
- #220 Find a nice hill to work on.
- #221 Realize that one of the greatest reasons for playing are the friendships you will make for life.
- #222 Be fundamental.
- #223 Learn the fundamentals.
- #224 Learn the work-outs and demands of players at the next level.
- #225 Don't let the referee determine the outcome of the game.
- #226 Play every game as if it is your last.
- #229 Dominate the loose balls.
- #233 Get a favorite team.
- #234 Get a favorite player.
- #235 Get a favorite coach.
- #236 Keep your shirt tucked in.
- #237 Don't ever try to separate yourself from the team.
- #238 Thank your teammates when you earn an individual honor.
- #241 Believe the magic of being part of something bigger than yourself.
- #243 Learn how to perform tricks with the ball.
- #244 Play in the rain (but not in the lightning).
- #247 Be a part of team celebrations.

- #248 Always put your hand in the team huddle.
- #249 Follow through.
- #250 Be willing to take a chance.
- #251 Learn how to protect the ball with your body.
- #252 Take pride in being a good sport.
- #253 Knock an underdog out early -- the longer it hangs around, the more confident it becomes.
- #254 Don't cheat in practice -- earn a reputation with your teammates for your honesty and integrity.
- #257 Concentrate.
- #258 Attack pressure.
- #259 Find a way.
- #260 Never give up hope.
- #261 Have fun.
- #262 Overcome adversity.
- #263 Be a part of the solution...not the problem.
- #264 Always know that your next shot is going in.
- #268 When you lose the ball on a turnover, explode to win it back immediately as that is the easiest time to win it back.
- #269 Don't be afraid to speak up.
- #270 Dig deep -- you will be surprised what you are capable of.
- #271 Never lose sight of the final goal.
- #272 Learn how to use an opponent's momentum against him/her.
- #273 Stay in on school nights.
- #274 Keep it simple.
- #276 Understand that your coach has your team's best interests in mind.
- #277 Realize that the game tape doesn't lie.
- #280 Expect the unexpected.
- #281 Realize that good defense leads to good offense.
- #286 Don't watch so much tv.
- #287 Watch HOOSIERS once a year.

- #288 Don't blame others for your mistakes.
- #289 Perfect a go-to move.
- #291 Realize that perfect practice makes perfect.
- #292 Learn how to put effective spin on the ball.
- #293 Learn how to read a ball's spin.
- #295 Learn how to communicate to a teammate with your eyes.
- #296 Learn where to move without the ball.
- #298 Play on your toes.
- #300 Make the best of all situations.
- #301 Play different sports.
- #302 Play something at all times of the year.
- #303 Play a lot of 1-on-1.
- #305 Play every day.
- #306 Be positive.
- #308 Be patient.
- #309 Over train in the off-season -- that's the time to exhaust yourself.
- #311 Work on your touch.
- #320 Watch BRIAN'S SONG.
- #324 Get prepared for next year, this year.
- #325 Realize that you need to have an enthusiastic, supportive bench to have a great team.
- #327 Do something extra after you have exhausted yourself -- that's how you develop your best condition, your toughness, and your will.
- #329 Be loyal.
- #330 Do sprints after playing in the off-season.
- #331 Never apologize for not using drugs or alcohol.
- #335 Give rides to younger teammates.
- #337 Maintain great condition throughout the year.
- #338 Don't believe everything you read in the newspapers.

- #340 Don't second-guess coaches' strategic decisions.
- #341 Give useful observations to your coach.
- #342 Talk out your disagreements with your coach privately after practice.
- #345 Accept apologies.
- #346 Tell your parents you love them.
- #348 Don't gamble.
- #349 Pay attention to details.
- #350 Don't be beaten by the same move twice.
- #351 Look people in the eye when you speak to them.
- #353 Realize that the key is not that you don't fall down but that you get up when you do fall down.
- #354 Find ways to bond with your teammates off the field.
- #357 Bring water.
- #359 Be a threat on offense.
- #360 Try to win sprints.
- #363 Realize that games are often won and lost in the first five and last five minutes of a half.
- #364 Compliment a rising player who may one day be at your level.
- #365 Share a laugh with a referee.
- #367 Ask your coach what you have to do to get better in the off-season.
- #371 Concentrate on being the best that you can be.
- #372 Realize that it's more important to be a great person than a great player.
- #375 Give credit to your teammates.
- #377 Never blame referees for a loss.
- #378 Never blame weather conditions for a loss.
- #381 Thank the trainer.
- #385 Slap hands with a teammate you are subbing for.
- #386 Slap hands with a teammate who is subbing for you.
- #388 Never blame teammates for a loss.
- #390 Act in a moral way off the field -- you will feel better, sleep better, and perform better on the field.

#393 Be alert for unusual passes.

#402 Enjoy the feeling of physical exhaustion -- it makes your body stronger.

#413 When you are injured, try to improve a skill unaffected by the injury.

#415 It's the journey, not the destination.

#416 Keep in mind that no matter how you perform at the critical moment of the game,
whether you succeed or fail, your father and mother will still love you.