

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS



Changing the culture of sport.

NAIA Champions of Character



“One athlete of character will improve a team. One team of character will improve a school. One school of character can impact an entire community.”

Bruce Brown NAIA Champions of Character Special Presenter

NAIA Champions of Character is changing the culture of sport.

The NAIA *Champions of Character* program is designed to instill an understanding of character values in sport, and provide student-athletes, coaches and parents the training to help them know the right thing, do the right thing, and value the right thing inside and outside of the sports setting.

Having worked with student-athletes for nearly 70 years, the NAIA understands the broader meaning of the term, “champion.” To us, a “champion” is not just about winning, it’s about advocating and defending a position. After decades of working with young people, we are focusing our organization on championing character values in students and those they associate with in sports and in their communities.

Launched by the NAIA in 2000, the *Champions of Character* program addresses issues of character values more comprehensively than any other national program for youth. The program currently reaches hundreds of thousands of students and coaches on approximately 300 colleges and university campuses in the United States and Canada.

A response to negative trends in sport.

Today, more than 52 million boys and girls participate in organized sports in the U.S. However, more than 70 percent of youth give up traditional team sports by the age of 13, citing poor relationships with coaches and parents as the determining factor.

This attrition, combined with a media culture that showcases increasingly abhorrent behavior by athletes, coaches, fans and parents, demands change. The NAIA’s *Champions of Character* program creates a positive environment that nurtures personal growth and fun sport activity for youth.

Why youth are giving up sports

- 84% of parents have witnessed “violent parental behavior” toward children, coaches or officials at kids’ sports events
Source: SportingKid Magazine (January 2004)
- 45% of youngsters say they have been called names, yelled at, or insulted while playing
Source: Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission
- 31% of participants in youth sports saw parents yelling or arguing with umpires, referees or officials
Source: U.S. Harris Interactive Youth Education Survey (September 2004)

Champions of Character emphasizes five key core values.

Respect

Those associated with sport show respect by treating themselves, other persons, institutions and their sport according to the highest standards of conduct. It implies civilized and gracious behavior, and applies to players, coaches, fans and parents.

Responsibility

Athletes show responsibility by making academic progress toward graduation their top priority. They solve problems rather than make excuses, and are reliable team players. Students should be accountable for their actions and decisions, and coaches and administrators should maintain high standards of competence and conduct.

Integrity

For student competitors and their coaches, integrity means keeping commitments and conducting honest behavior. Coaches must subscribe to and practice the Coaches Code and Code of Ethics, and student-athletes must know and understand the *Champions of Character* pledge.

Servant Leadership

This core value refers to putting the group first and becoming responsible for personal and group roles while performing at your best. Sports with servant leadership have a primary purpose of serving others while striving to become a personal and team leader. The servant-leader provides a critical service to society and the great gift of good example.

Sportsmanship

The conduct of educational sports according to the highest standards is our expectation for sportsmanship. Administrators, coaches, students, fans and parents are expected to act correctly even when others do not, and demonstrate fairness and equity in all contests and relationships.

Taking Champions of Character training into the community.

The NAIA has developed a comprehensive program of character training and we now have more than 45,000 athletic administrators, coaches and student-athletes who have been challenged to actively pursue and reflect the *Champions of Character* ideal.

The NAIA is establishing Program Centers at our member colleges and universities where our *Champions of Character* instructors and trainers work with youth as well as career and volunteer coaches to educate, promote and incorporate the five core character values within the daily activities of youth in these communities.

As part of its outreach mission with the *Champions of Character* program, the NAIA conducts training and motivational presentations to groups in the community.



The NAIA's Bruce Brown and Rob Miller make dynamic presentations for corporate audiences, teams and clubs, and organizations wishing to impart messages about character values impacting success.



The NAIA also spreads the positive messages of *Champions of Character* at our 23 championship events, where we reach large audiences and provide character training sessions for thousands of elementary and high school students.

As the program extends into school districts and youth organizations, special emphasis is placed on sharing character education with all "teams" within an organization, including sports teams, academic teams, and teams organized around social initiatives (i.e., yearbook staff or student council).



Bruce Brown, NAIA Champions of Character Special Presenter, brings principled messages to corporate, athletic and community teams.

What Champions of Character will look like in our community

- teams that reflect the *Champions of Character* core values
- parents and fans modeling proper behavior
- student-athletes serving the community as positive role models in athletics and in the classroom
- organizations leading youth in changing the culture of sports
- corporate partners supporting the values-based mission of the NAIA *Champions of Character* initiative



“Character has always been important. But with changes in society today, it needs more reinforcement than ever before.”

John Wooden

Legendary UCLA and NAIA Teacher & Coach

A legacy of progress and innovation with youth.

Winning through character-building is the NAIA's measure of success.

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics is a governing body for athletic programs of nearly 300 colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada. Our mission is to promote the education and development of students through intercollegiate athletic participation.

A leader in the development of student-athletes, the NAIA is committed to changing the culture of sport through *Champions of Character*. Founded in 1937, the NAIA continues to be a pioneer in implementing exceptional standards for academics, diversity and character. Today, the NAIA sponsors 23 collegiate championships in 13 sports. Our leadership role in athletics includes these accomplishments:



- the first collegiate athletic association to welcome historically black colleges and universities into membership (1953)
- the first to offer both men's and women's intercollegiate national championships (1980)
- the consistent leader in adopting high academic standards, with emphasis on the student-athlete making progress toward a degree
- the only intercollegiate athletics organization with a consistent emphasis on character development and an outreach program to extend beyond our campuses into the community

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