



The ATJ Weekly: Talent Gets Attention, Character Gets You Opportunities

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Why Talent Alone Isn't Enough

Every athlete wants to improve on their skills, earn playing time, and compete at the next level. While talent is important, coaches are looking for much more than athletic ability when evaluating recruits. The athletes who stand out are often the ones who consistently demonstrate leadership, discipline, and a strong work ethic both on and off the field or court. **Character** can be the difference between being noticed and being recruited.

What Makes Athletes Stand Out

When coaches evaluate athletes, they are not just watching highlights or looking at statistics. They are also paying attention to the qualities that make someone a great teammate and a reliable member of their program. Coaches invest a lot of time and resources into their athletes, so they want individuals who will positively represent their team both on and off the field. Some of the most important qualities coaches look for include work ethic, leadership, communication, accountability, and a positive attitude. An athlete who consistently **arrives prepared, gives maximum effort in practice, supports teammates, and responds well to feedback** often stands out just as much as an athlete with exceptional physical talent. Coaches know that skills can be developed over time, but character and habits are also a huge determining factor for long-term success. Building strong habits and maintaining a positive reputation early on can open doors to opportunities both during and after an athletic career. At the end of the day, talent may get a coach's attention, but character is what builds trust. The athletes who demonstrate integrity, commitment, and leadership are often the ones who create lasting impressions and earn opportunities at the next level.

1. **Education & Awareness**

2. **Training & Implementing**

★ **Leadership** ★



Leadership In Action

Caitlin Clark is widely recognized for her scoring ability and record breaking performance, but what truly sets her apart is the leadership and work ethic that helped her reach the top of her sport. During her time at Iowa, Clark became the face of women's college basketball, not only because of her talent, but because of the way she consistently competed, handled pressure, and inspired others around her. Throughout her career, Clark faced high expectations and intense scrutiny. Despite the spotlight, she remained focused on her team's success and continued to push herself to improve. Her commitment to preparation, willingness to learn, and ability to stay composed in big moments earned the respect of coaches, teammates, and fans alike.

Clark's journey demonstrated that talent may get people talking, but character is what builds trust and creates opportunities. Her leadership, determination, and accountability helped elevate her program and prepared her for success at the professional level. She serves as a great example of how the qualities coaches value most often extend far beyond athletic ability.

Clark's leadership goes beyond the court and is rotter in how she connects with the people around her. **"I think for my it's all about relationships, whether it's with management, the league commissioner, or your teammates. That's the most important thing in leadership."** (Caitlin Clark)

Key Takeaways

1. Coaches are not just recruiting athletes, they are recruiting teammates, leaders, and people to represent their program.
2. Talent can get our foot in the door, but work ethic and attitude are what builds trust with coaches.
3. The athletes who stand out long-term are the ones who consistently show discipline, leadership, and willingness to improve.

This week, focus on showing character in the small moments. In your next practice, game, or training session, set one goal that has nothing to do with stats. This can be something like communicating more, encouraging teammates, being early and prepared, or responding positively to coaching feedback. After each day, take a minute to reflect on whether your actions matched the kind of athlete you want coaches to trust and recruit. Small habits like these are what build a strong reputation over time.

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