

Youth Movement | Hereford Madness

by **Lauren McMillan**

Your favorite sports team falls behind, so the coach calls a timeout. But after this pause, your team makes a comeback. The crowd roars, the players engage, and the coaches plan the next play. What did the coach say during the timeout that drastically changed the players' mindsets? The coach found a new way to lead his or her team, and the players stepped up and worked together to ensure success. Although there may not be a screaming crowd to cheer on our daily lives, there are many leadership traits from the court that translate to life.

Leaders on the court

I am a huge college basketball fan. While watching the NCAA March Madness Tournament, I saw leadership both on and off the basketball court — the coach being

the most obvious example. Coaches support, push and trust their players to do their very best, which is an example of successful leadership. True leaders communicate, educate and encourage their team to achieve their best without stepping in and doing it themselves.

There is not just one leader on the court but multiple members who step up to build a great team. Teammates help each other reach their goals and recognize when a teammate can take a shot. When a player makes a mistake, he or she is often pulled aside by the coach. When that player returns to the game, he or she, using the coach's insight, tries not to make the same mistake. Mistakes are inevitable, but it is how you react and learn from the mistake, and how leaders lead through mistakes that make the difference.

This brings us to the concept of being coachable. No one stops learning. Leaders adapt and change because they are people too. By being flexible and open-minded to new ideas, the sky's the limit.

From NCAA to NJHA

The leadership and hard work that accompanies sports also applies to the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA). Members must be dedicated to their NJHA contests and practice at home before they compete. The Sullivan Supply Team Fitting Contest and the Hereford Quiz Bowl demonstrate how important teamwork is in the success of a project, and how true leaders make the difference in these teams.

Mentors help you learn from mistakes and guide you to success. During NCAA March Madness and NJHA events alike, we see senior team members mentoring younger teammates. Programs like Pen-to-Pen, Faces of Leadership and the BOLD Leadership Conference develop future



Lauren McMillan, leadership chair

leaders with the guidance of current and experienced leaders. These experiences allow members to step outside of their comfort zones and try new things, while learning more about themselves. Along the way, friendships grow and blossom into lifelong connections.

For sports fans, anticipation kicks in before the game. The moment everyone is united during the national anthem is soon lost in competitive sparring and rallying behind your respective sides. These feelings are often replicated at NJHA national shows and events. All the teamwork behind the scenes led to this moment, and the competitive nature clicks when walking into the showring. As leaders, we know that there are only a few winners.

However, as we advance our leadership, we support, encourage and challenge those around us, ultimately, challenging everyone to be better and work harder. Someone doesn't have to have the title of coach to be a leader. Everyone can be a leader or mentor, and I love to see this through the NJHA. Whether it is on the basketball court or in the show barn, leadership shapes an organization and its people. **HW**



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