

## **Gamesmanship or Lying?**

n/a

### **Ready:**

A false witness will not go unpunished, and one who utters lies perishes. — Proverbs 19:9

### **Set**

“If the rush gets close, fall down and act like you were hit. We get an automatic first down if we draw a roughing-the-punter penalty.” If the referees are not calling holding for offensive linemen, have we ever instructed our athletes to hang on just a little? Do we influence the referees by showing our players how to have “hinged heels” when drawing an offensive foul in basketball? Ever silently wished that the best player would miss just this one game so we don’t have to play against the best of the best? Do we coach gamesmanship, win-at-all-costs attitudes with manipulation of the rules? Is winning more important than teaching character in sport and life?

Psychologists have an ongoing study about lying, and a recent report indicates that each of us average approximately ten lies per day. In recent daily interactions, reflect on the example that we coaches provide to the students with whom we work and the community at large. Our lives often seem the proverbial fishbowl, under close scrutiny. Our players repeat our maxims around the dinner table after practice. It’s not just our speech; our behavior also gets filed away in a young person’s mind. For many impressionable young adults, our example in the athletic arena will etch a mental imprint for the rest of their lives.

As coaches each of us has the perfect example of teaching character. Follow the Bible and Christ’s work, and there will be no question about the direction we should lead our athletes. Be a living example, a true role model for God’s work.

### **Go**

1. Do my coaching and instruction closely follow God’s examples in Scripture?
2. What can I do now to counteract the “gamesmanship” that has been taught?
3. Have I tried to teach playing by the rules without looking for loopholes?

### **Workout**

Extra Reading: Psalms 119:160–163; Romans 3:4; Philippians 4:8

### **Overtime**

God, read me and examine my ways. Show me mistakes I have made in the example I set for those who interact with me each day. Help me to speak the truth in all I do and play the game

of life following my Lord's rules. Amen.

**Bible Reference:**

Philippians 4



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