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Growing Leaders: Learning to Lead Through Sport

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IBSC Conference, Gold Coast

July 2018



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Key Questions

- How can the learning experiences of boys be enhanced by developing leadership skills in a sporting context?
- How does learning to lead through sport prepare boys to face the challenges of tomorrow?
- How do you intentionally create leaders in sport?
- Some practical examples



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What is Leadership?

‘The behavioral process of influencing individuals and groups towards set goals.’

- In sport, these include:
 - Making decisions
 - Motivating participants
 - Giving feedback
 - Establishing rapport and interpersonal relationships
 - Directing the group or team confidently

- Therefore, a purpose of school sport is to help boys gain the important life and leadership skills that will enable them to be successful in the future.



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What is Leadership?

- **An Achievement or Responsibility?**
- **Leadership in Action and Service**
 - More than just a name
- **Core Values – Empowering Climate**
 - Honour
 - Courage
 - Humility
 - Fellowship
- **Leadership Code – Binding - Sustained Success**



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Where Does Leadership Come From?

■ **Innate or Learnt?**

- Trait Theory
- Social Learning Theory

■ **What Forms Can It Take?**

- Task Orientated/Authoritarian
- Person Orientated/Democratic
- Disorientated/Laissez-faire

- **Good Leadership** utilises a combination of styles according to the situation



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Leadership Development

■ Opportunities

- Be a change agent
- Experiences
- Formal courses
- External talks
- Internal talking

■ Threats

- Time
- Institutional resistance to change
- Role models
- The pressure of the peer group
- Adult expectation
- The school of 'hard knocks'



Growth Mindset

■ Fixed vs Growth

- Doubt vs Belief
- Avoidance vs Time and effort
- Brain plasticity – the actions taken determine neural growth pattern
- A malleable quality

■ Why Does It Matter?

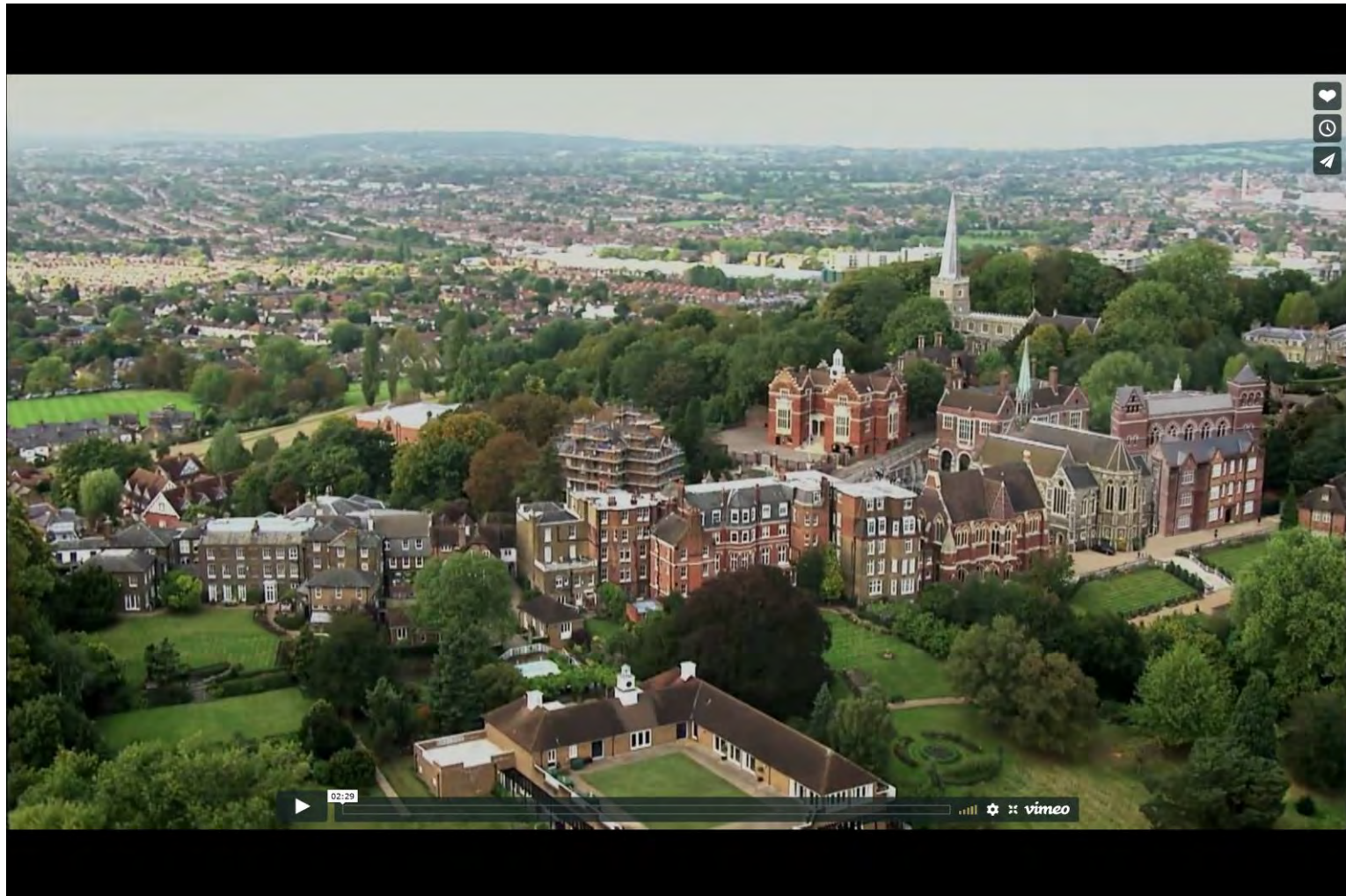
- Type of feedback vital – praise effort and hard work
- Removal of stereotyping
- Choose a challenge
- Learn from them
- Culture shift
- Increased motivation

Harrow School Video Clip

- <https://vimeo.com/156244148>



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Purpose of Harrow School

‘Harrow prepares boys with diverse backgrounds and abilities for a life of learning, leadership and personal fulfilment’

To achieve our purpose we place an emphasis on **five** key areas:

- **Scholarship** - Encouraging intellectual curiosity
- **Opportunity** - Ensuring boys perform to their potential
- **Character** - Developing mature boys of good influence
- **People** - Recruit boys & staff who will facilitate excellence and thrive
- **Operations** - Provide environments and infrastructure that set us apart



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A Philosophy for Sport at Harrow

‘Arm boys with intent and step aside’

- Focused on the long-term development of boys in their **tactical, technical, mental, and physical skills**.
- Coaching is aimed at the performance of these core skills at a consistently high level and then creating an awareness of how to **tactically apply them effectively in competitive situations**.
- The drive to learning new skills and enhance existing skills, is central to maximising a boy's potential and in preparing them to flourish beyond Harrow.



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Values in Sport

- A Harrovian demonstrating **Honour** will:
 - Conduct himself respectfully and responsibly, understanding that he is an ambassador
 - Respect timings for training and match days, officials and their judgements and the opposition and their performance
 - Encourage his team mates in their endeavors and set the highest personal standards
 - Communicate positively and proactively with team mates, coaches and staff
 - Play with integrity – hard but fairly



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Values in Sport

- A Harrovian demonstrating **Courage** will:
 - Give his all, even when faced with considerable challenge or adversity
 - Embrace new experiences and challenges, using them as a chance to develop resilience and creativity
 - Listen openly and carefully to constructive criticism, using it as a springboard to improve and grow
 - Take the opportunity to represent his house and the school in competition



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Values in Sport

- A Harrovian demonstrating **Humility** will:
 - There is no 'I' in team – a team first approach
 - Accept defeat graciously and use it an opportunity to develop the value of perseverance
 - Act magnanimously in victory, demonstrating respect for the efforts of others
 - Understand the impact of Harrow's participation in and provision of sport in the wider community
 - Take part willingly, understanding the importance of serving others

Values in Sport



- A Harrovian demonstrating **Fellowship** will:
 - Work to build an inclusive and supportive atmosphere on and off the sports field
 - Demonstrate a dedication and commitment to the team and its common goals
 - Encourage, support and inspire all boys to do their best - building strong relationships



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Sport at Harrow School

■ 25 Sports

- 840-850 boys aged 13-18

Major Team Sports:

- 22 Rugby teams
 - 2 British Lions
- 25 Soccer teams
 - 3 Pro Soccer Players
- 18 Cricket teams
 - 2 Test Cricketers

‘Minor’ Sports:

- From Polo to Judo to Swimming to Squash

■ Provision

- Culture of participation
- 115 fulltime academic staff
- 50+ part time external coaches
- Strong links to professional organisations
 - Saracens, Chelsea FC, Middlesex CCC
- Strong links to Governing Bodies
 - RFU, ISFA, ECB, Team GB
- Hosting elite teams – Wallabies, ABs, Broncos



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Leadership and The Community

■ Relationships Influence Leadership Development:

- Between staff
- Between staff and boys
- Between boys and families
- Between boys, staff, families and communities

■ As a Result:

- Role models
- Reinforcement of behaviours
- Can be included in reporting
- Can be discussed at parents' meetings, on touchlines and other informal events



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Leadership and The Community

■ Parents have a big part to play:

- Encourage parents to allow their boys to lead
- Ask parents to encourage and challenge boys to lead at home
- Let boys lead what they want to – They have a voice and a choice

■ And so do staff and coaches:

- Providing opportunities for boys to lead
- Talking about leadership with boys
- Promoting leadership through action and service
- Reinforcing positive behaviours

Leadership Cycle



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How Could We Do It?



- **A Ten Point Plan**
- **Formal Courses**
- **External Talks**
- **Internal Talking**



A Ten Point Plan

1. Model Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

- Identify your emotions
- Demonstrate appropriate behaviour
- Develop your knowledge of self

2. Do Not Obsess About Achievement

- You can't do it alone
- Surround yourself with great people

3. Do Not Praise Too Much

- Allow healthy self esteem to develop self confidence – X factor
- 'Everyone gets a trophy' - confusion and false confidence
- Development of a fixed mindset

4. Allow Boys To Experience Risk and Failure

- Learning pit
- Appropriate risk taking
- Tolerating failure
- Support – character development



A Ten Point Plan

5. Say No

- Do not overindulge
- Encourages development of work ethic
- Patience and persistence

6. Let Boys Solve Their Own Problems – Challenge Them

- Risk
- Develops self sufficiency and resilience
- Critical thinking ability
- Accountability

7. Walk Your Talk

- Demonstrate aspirational behaviour
- Authenticity
- Be transparent and forthcoming

8. Show You Are Human

- Display vulnerability
- Loss of guilt
- Fear of failure
- Empathy



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A Ten Point Plan

9. Encouragement

- Before sport
- During sport
- After sport
- Outside sport

10. Talking About Leadership

- Discussion
- Simple questions
- Individual boys
- Groups of boys

We can mold our boys into leaders, but only if we spend time working at it in the right way consistently

Formal Courses



- **What Are The Challenges?**
 - Boys' attitudes
 - Staff approaches
 - Time in the school day.....and priorities outside it
- **What Are The Answers?**
 - Inspire
 - Autonomy
 - Frequency
 - Exposure to more staff and coaches
 - Putting boys at the centre of planning
 - The cultural landscape in houses and the school

Formal Courses: The Philathletic Club



■ The Philathletic Club

- U6th Form boys
- Ambassadors and role models
- Captains of Major Sports and elite performers
- Head of School – key stakeholders

■ The Nature of The Role and Responsibility:

- Horizontal and vertical integration – Sport for all
- Direct involvement in the development of Sport
- The starting point for the inter-house Sport competitions



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Formal Courses: OT Mentorship

- **10-18 boys per year group**
 - Horizontal integration across sports by year
 - Vertical integration by sport across year groups
 - Allowing boys to share their experiences, and offer each other support and advice

- **An Example: OT Mentorship Scheme**
 - Five educational sessions per academic year. Each delivered to one-year group of OT's at a time.
 - Each discipline will have a clear POS with a common thread building on the previous year's session.



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Formal Courses: Practicalities

■ Freedom of Choice for Staff

- Staff invited to submit multiple proposals for programme
- Staffing requirements/demands elsewhere

■ Freedom of Choice for Boys

- The psychology of choosing what they attend....
- When they attend...
- ..and the number of them

■ Freedom of Timing

- Different regimes for different boys – sport dependent
- Allowing boys to prioritise academic work/exams
 - an inevitability



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Formal Courses: Good Practices

■ Initiatives for Staff

- On-line, pre-prepared courses and resources
- Group-style
- Mixing business and pleasure
- Emphasising the visual and practical
- Ensuring a range
- Different learning environments

■ Activities for Boys

- Practical
- Presentations
- Posters
- Flipped learning
- Peer coaching
- Peer assessment
- Independence
- Fear of failure...

External Talks: Outside the School Day



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- **External to the School Day**
 - Twilight and evening lectures/sessions
 - Inspirational speakers

- **External to the School**
 - Visiting experts/specialists
 - Speakers with a high public profile
 - Balance to strike and bias to avoid

External Talks: Motivating Attendance



■ The Challenges for Boys

- Competing demands on their time
- Peer pressure
- Lemming effect
- Fixed mindset

■ The Solutions to Those Challenges

- Courage
- Self-organisation
- Mentoring schemes
- Accounting for their time
- Accounting for their parents' money (and award!)



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External Talks: Hybrid Model

■ The Butler Lecture Series

- Rotating through sports
- High performance experts invited for two days - resident
- Compulsory lessons/sessions and optional lectures
- Celebrating the sporting life of different athletes
- Collaborative across departments
- Inviting parents, other schools, other staff and coaches

Internal Talking

■ An Unsuccessful Model

- Why are they making us do this?
- What is the point of this?
- Why can't I just get on with my work?
- Do you remember....?

■ The Objective

- Discussion among boys, staff and coaches - clarity
- Anticipation for the next event – quality key
- Pride in attendance
- ‘Do you remember...?’
- ‘Wouldn't it be great if...?’



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Internal Talking - Both Boys and Staff

■ Intersport Clinic Series

- Themed - allowing boys to relate one to another
- Morning/Evening sessions, but multiple leaders
- Internally organised
- Attended by staff and coaches

■ Structures for Conversations

- Informal, at the start/end training sessions
- Regular and formal, through staff and coaches
- Among groups of boys both vertically and horizontally through year groups



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Internal Talking - Among staff

- **Why Did We Choose Our Sports in the First Place?**
 - Rediscovering and maintaining enthusiasm
 - Keeping current with best practice and innovation

- **The Collegiate Environment**
 - Presenting to our peers – internal CPD
 - Enjoying the company of other practitioners

- **The Foundations for Next Year**
 - Future leadership opportunities and courses?
 - Future sessions and presentations?
 - What challenges can we provide our boys?



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In Summary....

- Leadership: the cornerstone of the conversation
- Structures and Culture: the life of leadership
- Autonomy with responsibility within a framework is key
- External Factors: need to engage, include and manage
- Internal Factors: boys learning from their experiences, each other, their staff and coaches

And finally



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- Contact details: btm@harrowschool.org.uk

Winston Churchill (OH – 1888 to 1892)



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‘Tact is the ability to tell someone to go to hell in such a way that they look forward to it’

‘A fanatic is one who cannot change their mind and will not change the subject’

‘Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.’



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