

Mechanics

“In the end, the choice you make, makes you.”

Coach John Wooden’s Pyramid of Success is not new. It was not kept a secret as Coach Wooden often talked of how he came to be so successful and wrote several books about how he developed the idea of a “success pyramid” over many years of coaching. As I read and study Wooden on Leadership, I have an appreciation for the depth of each principle, the character that must be developed to have these qualities and how difficult it is to employ them. Part of what made this work for Coach Wooden was his ability to communicate. He was an English teacher with a love of words. In an interview when he was quite elderly, he still could quote extensive poems that he loved. He took his own advice: he never stopped learning. And as a coach, he never stopped teaching.....teaching these principles of character, integrity and values.

The middle tier of his pyramid is made up of just three things that I consider mechanics. They are Condition, Skill and Team Spirit. It is easy to see how the base of the pyramid is necessary to support these three.

Condition	Skill	Team Spirit
Self-Control	Alertness	Initiative Intentness
Industriousness	Friendship	Loyalty Cooperation Enthusiasm

CONDITION

There is more than one type of conditioning. We typically think of physical conditioning as soon as we hear the word, but mental and moral conditioning is just as important. For Coach Wooden, there was no long list of “dos and don’ts” in his system....just some common sense. His philosophy was “practice moderation in all things.” However, he was known to caution his players following a grueling workout designed to build physical strength, that “all accomplished in the workout can be lost in minutes by making wrong choices between now and the next day’s practice”. He posted this quote: *“There is a choice you have to make, in everything you do. So keep in mind that in the end, the choice you make, makes you.*

Two keys to physical, mental and moral condition are correct priorities and good balance. These keep all aspects of a busy life from being overwhelmed in one area to the neglect of another. When in balance, responsibilities of personal life, professional life and/or athletic endeavors are not pressure but pleasant commitments you are eager to fulfill.

SKILL

Every job, whether commercial or athletic, requires not a skill but a set of skills. To succeed, you must be able to perform all aspects of your job, not just part of it. Regardless of the specific skills, all must be mastered. For an advanced marksman, the physical positions are mastered first, then he must master strategy, timing, mental and emotional control all while executing not just one shot, but the entire match--shot after shot. Part of skill is to meet and adjust to challenges that occur. The person who cannot adjust finds challenges to be adversity and they are defeated by them.

TEAM SPIRIT

Although the shooting sports are individually fired, we often form teams and combine scores for a Team Score. But that alone does not build “team spirit”. Rapport with the others on their team is built when individuals perform to the best of their ability for the good of the team. Team spirit must go beyond individuals seeking their own glory and self promotion to an eagerness to see the team succeed as each individual does his part.

