

A team is a group of people with a common goal. A school's football team has two goals. One goal is to win. That is what the team wants to do. The other goal is to build character. Character is what a person values, how a person relates to others. That is why schools have football teams. They want to help students build good values.

There are many character traits that a football player can develop. One is leadership. The quarterback of the team is a leader. The quarterback makes choices—which play to do, who will get the ball. The quarterback has a big job. The quarterback has to inspire the players to work together. If they are losing, the quarterback has to work even harder, to give the players hope they still can win.

There is another leader, too. The leader of the defensive group. When the defensive group is playing, that means the team may lose points. So the leader has to keep the team members working together to stop that.

Each team member builds character. They learn to cooperate. They learn to make good decisions. They work hard. They practice every day. They learn to follow the rules. If a team member does not follow the rules, the entire team suffers.

Each team member has a position. Each position is part of winning. No one player has the ability to win the game for the team. Only if the team works together does a team win. People often say, "There is no I in TEAM."

Whether the team wins or loses, at the end of the game they congratulate the other team. That is called sportsmanship. While they fight to win during the game, it is just a game. They cannot be angry with the other team. If they are, they'll hear from their coach.

The coach makes sure the team reaches the school's goal. The coach cares about the whole team. The coach gives each player advice. When the team wins, everyone celebrates. And the coach is glad. But after the season is over, the coach is still happy. The coach gets to see the players as they go to school every day. The character they have built is part of their success in school, too.

Some coaches say that if you go into a classroom at their school you'll be able to tell the players. It is not that they are bigger than the other students. It is the ones who are helping other students work. Teamwork is part of their lives.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

1. Why do schools have football teams?

- a. to win games
- b. to educate students
- c. to get money
- d. to make people proud

2. How should a quarterback feel?

- a. like the best player
- b. like a partner with other players
- c. like the star
- d. like a coach

3. How should each team member feel?

- a. brave
- b. careful
- c. responsible
- d. smart

4. What is most important to a coach?

- a. winning the game
- b. when the season ends
- c. summer vacation
- d. progress for the players

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*
How does football help players? Why?

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	b	b	c	d

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. They learn sportsmanship. They learn to be persistent. They learn to work hard. All of those are part of doing a good job.

Jose was a quarterback at his old school. The team had won 8 of its 10 games. He knew how to play. He had to transfer to a new school this year. His family had moved to the other side of the city.

When he got to school the first day, he went to see the football coach. He said, "I want to be quarterback."

"You're late," the coach replied. "We had tryouts last spring. We already have a quarterback. We even have a backup. So you can come to practice. But we don't have a place for you on the team."

Jose was discouraged. He told his stepfather that he wanted to go back to his old school. But his stepfather said that they could not move back there because his new job was on this side of the city. "Your mother's family is near here, too, and we need to go to help them sometimes now that your grandmother is sick."

Jose had not made any friends, and he sat alone in his room. He would text his old friends at his old school, and they would text back with news. But that just made him unhappier.

Then he went to the first practice. The coach said, "Jose, help with the warm-up. Let's see what you can do."

Jose played with the team, practicing, just throwing passes at first. Then the coach put him into some plays. Meanwhile, Jose was watching Mason, the quarterback. "He's not that good," he said. "I could do better." But he knew he was wrong. Mason could throw the ball farther, faster, and more accurately.

Then Mason turned to him. "Let's give Jose a chance." So Jose did take the quarterback role for one play. As they played, he realized that it wasn't the quarterback who made the play work. It was the whole team. The team took the ball he passed and made a touchdown. All he had done was make the first pass.

After the practice, he went to the coach. He told him that he would be proud to be able to help the team. He said that he did not expect to be on the team but wanted to be with them. "I just love football," he said. "I didn't realize until today that I just want to be part of the game."

The coach asked him to be part of their practices from then on. "Next year, Jose, we will have a position for you."

By the end of the season Jose had many friends. One of his best friends was Mason.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

6. At first, how does Jose feel about the new school?

- a. lonely
- b. glad
- c. angry
- d. sad

7. How does the coach help Jose?

- a. He gives him a job.
- b. He teaches him.
- c. He is mean to him.
- d. He is friendly to him.

8. How does Jose's stepfather feel about his family?

- a. responsible
- b. sorry
- c. angry
- d. sad

9. At first, Jose is

- a. strong
- b. caring
- c. selfish
- d. mean

10. *Write your own answer to this question.*
Why does Mason become Jose's friend?

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Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	d	b	a	c

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. He helps Jose, he lets him play even though he does not play as well as he does.