

NSA

Character Development Model





Character Development Overview

The NSA Character Development Model is designed to create a foundation for developing both elite soccer players and elite men and women. Our club has helped approximately 1,000 players achieve the collegiate playing level, but we also want to help children achieve their goals and visions outside of soccer, whatever those may be. Doing so requires an approach that not only leads to the development of soccer skills and game understanding, but also develops powerful people.

Challenges happen for players both on the field and off the field. While our training sessions are about 90 minutes, that gives us a total of 3 to 4.5 hours per week training with each player. It's a very small amount of time to make a lasting impact. Our character development model is the tool we will use to create a more powerful, long-term impact in both life and soccer.

We want to create great individuals with big dreams and visions. Individuals that can see a path to those dreams and visions and have the character to handle adversity and make the difficult decisions along the way. We want to help create individuals that are tolerant of others, kind, work well with others and have the courage to take action in the face of fear.

We want to help create amazing individuals. We want to create a love of the game of soccer. We want to create elite-level players as well as those that play for enjoyment, regardless of level.

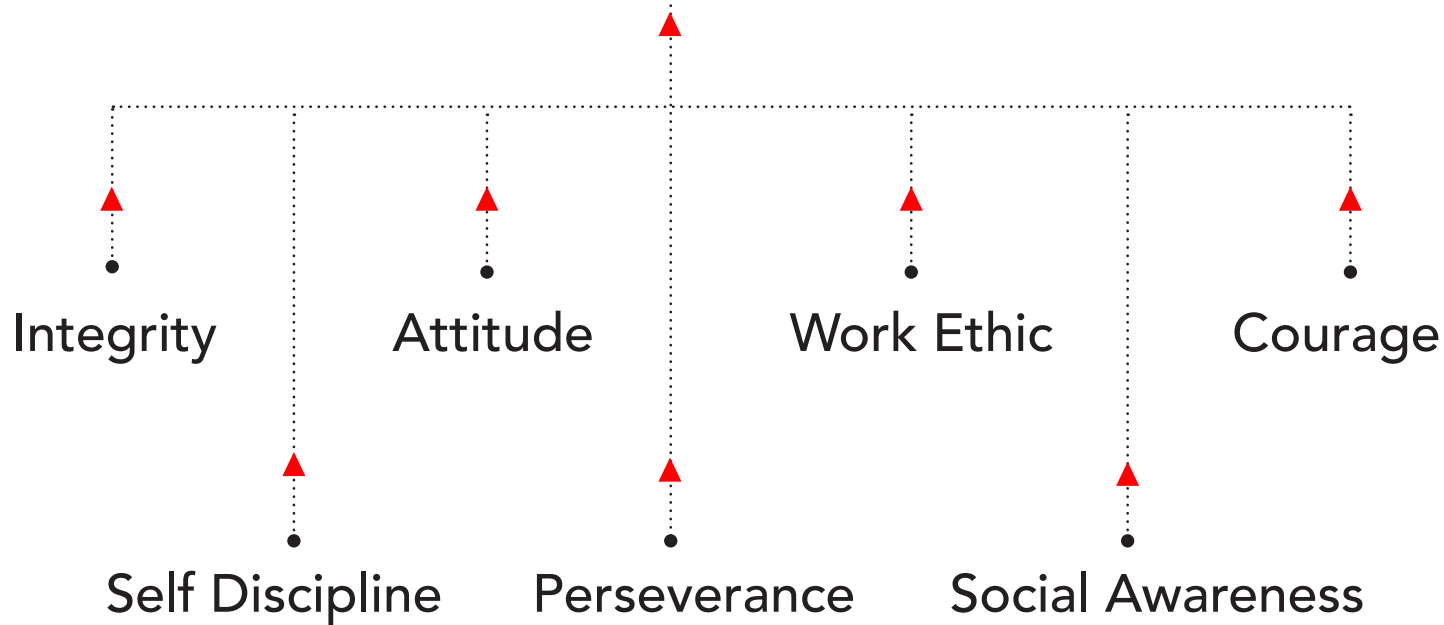
The NSA Character Development Model is the foundation for developing both elite soccer players and powerful individuals.





Character Development Model

Excellence • ◀ ▶ • **Giving Back**





Goals Of The Program

The character development model builds both players and people. As such, there are certain outcomes that we strive to produce through it. In addition, there will also be likely, though not fully intended, benefits as well. Here are some of the goals of the character development model:

Goal

Bring Consistent Awareness Of The Character Traits To Soccer And Life

Each player will have a copy of the character development model. As coaches, we will keep the program in front of players on a consistent basis. We can do this by tying coaching points to character traits, showing the connection between game situations/decisions to character traits, and having conversations with players about life outside of soccer in relation to the character traits.

Goal

Help Kids Take Responsibility For Their Soccer & Personal Development

When we coach players, a lot of time we are instructing them to do certain things at certain times. We are dictating what should be done according to what we want as a coach. With our character development model, that responsibility shifts to the players in a sense. As they get older, through practicing the character traits, they will have the confidence to choose the path they want. As coaches, we are there to guide them and help them find the right level of challenge to create the growth they seek. 'Excellence' as one of the outcomes guides them down the development path they choose.



Goal

Create Real Community Involvement & Giving Back

In the character development model, the two primary outcomes are 'Excellence' and 'Giving Back'. We believe both of those objectives go hand-in-hand and we will look to have every team/player actively give to their community or give to causes they support. Not only do we want to be active in this while players are part of the club, but we also want this outcome to last long into adulthood.

Goal

Create Good, Quality People

As parents, having children that grow up to be kind, courageous, resilient and act with integrity and self-discipline is likely a goal for all of us. Having the character development model present and active in the club sets the expectation how players, coaches and parents act. Making the character traits habits will help us create amazing individuals.

Goal

Create Elite-Level Soccer Players

Part of our job as a club, is to develop elite level players and prepare them for taking the next step in their soccer journey. As players approach academy levels, ODP, college and professional soccer, the more important the mentality of the player becomes. As the speed and level of play increase, the stronger a player's character and mentality need to be. As the kids learn and coaches help implement character development, they will start to naturally build the mental strength, resiliency and character that is needed to play at the highest levels.





Defining The Character Traits

Each character trait is unique and may be interpreted slightly different. Here are the definitions of each trait:

Self Discipline

The ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses; the ability to pursue what one thinks is right despite temptations to abandon it.

In both soccer and life, kids face challenges where one option is a simpler, easier way to go, but another option, that requires more effort/courage/risk, is probably the better option. Can we act with self discipline to achieve the results we want?

Perseverance

Steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.

Though cliché, the great things in life and soccer rarely come quickly and easily. Can kids push through difficult challenges? When they get tired on the field, can they dig deeper and fight through the fatigue? When they're overwhelmed with schoolwork or other issues, do they have the grit to make it through the difficult journey to the end? We want to create individuals that show perseverance on the field and off of it.

Integrity

The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness.

One of the most important, but difficult to define traits is integrity. On a basic level, can we do what we say when we say we will do it? On a deeper level, are we acting with integrity as to our beliefs? On the field, if we, as a team, agree that every one of us will give 100% effort in training and games, are we doing that? Do we have integrity with that commitment? One of the most powerful things we can do is help kids get present to their integrity and use it actively.

Social Awareness

Recognize, understand and manage our own emotions. Recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others.

As kids get older, their circle of influence will grow. As it does, and as they are exposed to new and different kinds of people and situations, do they handle it the right way? In a game where we are winning by a landslide and the match-up is unfair, do the kids recognize how the other team is feeling and can they adjust their play accordingly? What about when we are losing in a similar situation? We want our players to be able to recognize the attitudes and feelings of those around them and adjust theirs to best handle situations.

Courage

Mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

When our team is in a championship match that is tied at the end of regulation time and goes to penalty kicks, are we brave enough to volunteer to take a penalty, even under high pressure? There are so many situations in soccer and in life that require risk-taking and that inherently have one of the outcomes being failure. We want to help kids recognize those situations, acknowledge their fear, and choose to act.



Work Ethic

A belief in work as a moral good; a set of values centered on the importance of doing work and reflected especially in a desire or determination to work hard.

Are we putting in the amount of work to achieve our goals? Both as players and in other areas of life, kids will have visions, dreams and wants. Achieving those requires varying degrees of effort. Some will take little to no effort while others may require massive effort over an extended period of time. Can we help kids recognize required effort and guide them to carrying it out?

Positive Attitude

A favorable mental position with regard to a fact or state; an optimistic feeling or emotion toward a fact or state.

Having a positive attitude generally makes people happier, but keeping a positive attitude through difficult challenges is something entirely different. Using the example above, when we are losing to another team, or when an individual is having a particularly poor performance, can they maintain a positive attitude through those times? This will lead to mental strength and the ability to manage a player's attitude and emotions in difficult times.





The Character Development Model For Players

For our players, the character development model acts as a guide to develop both as a player and as a person. For soccer development, it will set the stage and act as the foundation our soccer development model is built upon. It will also help each player develop as a person. The ultimate goal is for the character development model to encompass playing soccer within the club as well as building the character to succeed as individuals in whatever our players pursue in life.

The character development model can also be seen as a set of tools kids can use for problem solving and handling a variety of life situations. They can internalize the character development model and draw on it whenever they need it.

The character development model is also the standard of our club and in this respect, we expect kids to operate within it as players and people. It holds our players (and everyone within the club) to a higher standard.

We want to help develop great people and players through our character development model.





The Character Development Model For Coaches

Coaches are responsible for translating the character development model to the players and parents. In addition to that, coaches must embody the character traits and be an example of it to both parents and players.

As coaches, we are the most visible extension of the club in the sense that we are who players and parents typically interact with. We are responsible for bringing the character traits into the space for players to observe and experience. They should guide our actions and we should bring them to each training session and game.

During training and games we can tie coaching points to the character traits. In 1v1 or high pressure situations, we can refer to courage. When winning or losing big we can bring up social awareness, integrity and perseverance. There will be dozens of opportunities to connect soccer and outside activities with the character development model. As coaches, we facilitate that connection.



The Character Development Model For NSA

As a club the character development model guides how we communicate in every aspect of club business. The team managers need to be aware of the model, as well as coaches, players, board members, part-time staff, etc. Anyone involved in the club needs to be aware of the development model and operate within it.

Some of the key areas that will be affected by the character development model are:

- Club communications
- Parent & player expectations
- Scheduling
- Camps, clinics and other events
- Soccer development philosophy & guidelines
- Giving back to the community and parents/players

On a general level, everyone at the club needs to operate in and embody the character development model as players and parents within the club will expect that the club honors its model. Just as important, when we come into contact with those outside of the club, they experience something special, something that you don't find anywhere else.

When the club makes decisions, do we do so with the the character development model in mind? Are we acting with integrity as to the best interests of our players and their families? When we create teams after tryouts, are we doing it in a way that has the best interests of our players in mind?

As a club, we will make hundreds of decisions every season. The character development model is our guide to make sure those decisions are made in the best possible way. If we are embodying the character development model in our decisions as a club, we will always set the stage for our players to develop as both soccer players and as quality people.

