

While the country is still watching replays and schoolkids lie in bed dreaming of All Blacks' glory, the All Blacks themselves are tidying up after themselves.

Sweeping the sheds.

Doing it properly.

So no one else has to.

Because no one looks after the All Blacks.

The All Blacks look after themselves.

It's an 'example of personal discipline' says Andrew Mehrtens, former All Blacks fly-half (what New Zealanders call a first five eight) and the second highest All Blacks points scorer of all time.

It's not expecting somebody else to do your job for you. It teaches you not to expect things to be handed to you.'

'If you have personal discipline in your life,' he says, 'then you are going to be more disciplined on the field. If you're wanting guys to pull together as a team, you've got to have that. You don't want a group of individuals.'

It's not going to make you win all the time,' he says, 'but it's certainly going to make you better as a team over the long run.'

Vince Lombardi, the legendary coach of the Green Bay Packers American football team, inherited

an outfit that was down on its luck. It had foundered at the bottom of the NFL for years and even the fans saw no way back. Lombardi took over the team in 1959. Two years later they won the NFL, and again in 1962 and 1965, followed by the Super Bowl in 1966 and 1967.

He hands on to Wayne Smith, the other assistant coach. Smithy is a taut, lean man with a shrewd, lined expression. He's a man who knows men, how they think, how they work, how to get the best from them; the guts of this team. He makes a few incisive points and hands on to 'Gilly', Nic Gill PhD, the conditioning coach, who hands on in turn to Graham Henry - 'Ted', the headmaster of the team, the head coach. A witty man, Henry's dry humour doesn't always carry on television. He is the boss here, the Svengali, the ringmaster for this roadshow.

Henry congratulates McCaw on becoming the most successful captain in All Blacks history. Then he tells the team there's work to be done. A lot of work to be done.

Muliaina reminds the players to remember the sacrifices they have made to be in this room. Finally, he proposes a toast to McCaw.

'To Skip!' he says.

'To Skip,' the room replies.

'Well done, guys,' he says. 'Let's go.'

This is when something happens that you might not expect. Two of the senior players - one an international player of the year, twice - each pick up a long-handled broom and begin to sweep the sheds. They brush the mud and the gauze into small piles in the corner.

His success, he said, was based on what he called the 'Lombardi Model', which began with a simple statement:

— *Only by knowing yourself can you become an effective leader.*

For him, it all begins with self-knowledge, with the great 'I Am'; a fundamental understanding and appreciation of our own personal values. It was on this foundation that he built his teams and his success.

From self-knowledge, Lombardi believed, we develop character and integrity. And from character and integrity comes leadership.

Jon Kabat-Zinn (*In Wherever You Go, There You Are*) tells a story about Buckminster Fuller, the visionary architect and thinker.

Depressed and considering suicide, Fuller asked himself some questions that revolutionized his life:

— *'What is my job on the planet? What is it that needs doing, that I know something about, that probably won't happen unless I take responsibility for it?'*

These questions, in turn inspired Lombardi, and might in turn inspire us. This might mean taking responsibility for a team, for a company or for the lives of thousands; or it might be something as simple as sweeping the sheds. Either way, it begins with character, and character begins with humility. At the start of each season, Lombardi would hold up the pigskin and say, 'Gentlemen, this is a football.'

Under coach John Wooden, the UCLA Bruins basketball team won the US national collegiate championship for seven straight years, starting in 1967. At the start of each season, writer Claudia Luther reports, he would sit his team down in their locker room and, for a long time – for a very long time – they would learn how to put on their socks:

— *Check the heel area. We don't want any sign of a wrinkle about it . . . The wrinkle will be sure you get blisters, and those blisters are going to make you lose playing time, and if you're good enough, your loss of playing time might get the coach fired.*

The lesson wasn't really about blisters, or playing time, or whether the coach got fired. It was about doing the basics right, taking care of the details, looking after yourself and the team. It was about humility.

'Winning takes talent,' John Wooden would say. 'To repeat it takes character.'

Like the All Blacks head coach Graham Henry, John Wooden was a teacher. Which is no coincidence.

Another remarkable man was American football coach Bill Walsh, who also considered himself a teacher first, a leader second.

Between 1979 and 1989, Walsh coached the San Francisco 49ers from an underperforming bunch of also-rans into one of the great sporting dynasties in gridiron history by employing a similar philosophy. He believed that, 'You get nowhere without character. Character is essential to individuals, and their cumulative character is the backbone of your winning team.'

LEGACY

Create the highest possible operating standards, develop the character of your players, develop the culture of your team and, as the title of Walsh's book proclaims, *The Score Taker Care of Itself*.

'Walsh knew,' Stuart Lancaster, the current England rugby coach, told rugby writer Mark Reason, 'that if you established a culture higher than that of your opposition, you would win. So rather than obsessing about the results, you focus on the team.'

'The challenge of every team is to build a feeling of oneness, of dependence on one another,' said Vince Lombardi. 'Because

Collective character is vital to success.

Focus on getting the

culture right; the results will follow.

the question is usually not how well each person performs, but how well they work together.'

Owen Eastwood is a man of many talents. A lawyer for clients including the All Blacks, he has also worked as a consultant for the South African Proteas, NATO Command and other organizations on culture creation programs. Eastwood uses the equation:

$$\text{Performance} = \text{Capability} + \text{Behaviour}$$

The way you behave, he argues, will either bring out the best or worst of your capability, and this applies to businesses and teams as well as to individuals. 'Leaders create the right environment for the right behaviours to occur,' says Eastwood. 'That's their primary role.'

Behaviour exists in two domains, he continues: Public and Private.

'The Public Domain' means those areas of a player's life when he is under team protocol – whether at training, during

CHARACTER

a game, travelling or on promotional duty. Professionalism, physical application and proficiency are demanded here.

'The Private Domain' is the one in which we spend time with ourselves and where our mind-game plays out. This is the biggest game of all, as daily we confront our habits, limitations, temptations and fears.