



FOUR AT THE FIELD

Four at the Field is a coaching strategy used to create a Culture of Belonging.

Intentionally welcoming student-athletes on to the field:

- Builds a sense of acceptance and community
- Strengthens transformational coach/student-athlete relationships
- Increases team bonding and commitment

- You communicate you matter when you know and use your student-athlete's names.
- Discover preferred nicknames by asking your student-athletes what they want to be called.
- Use your student-athlete's names each time you welcome them onto your field.

Coaching Point

- If you don't know all of your student-athletes names yet, look them in the eyes and ask what their name is.
- Use athletic tape and a magic maker to make name tags for their helmets or vests.

Examples

- "Hey Charlie, so glad you could make it to practice today!"
- "Hey Tarik, I'm proud of you and the way you are supporting your teammates!"

STEP 1 NAME TO NAME



- Eye contact is foundational to building relationships with your student-athletes.
- It is essential for expressing empathy and instilling integrity.
- Be intentional by teaching and modeling eye contact with your student-athletes.

Coaching Point

- Teach your student-athletes to look you in the eyes while you greet them and teach them how to greet you back. This is an important life skill that isn't often taught.
- This may feel uncomfortable for your student-athletes. Ensure them that it will get easier with time.

Example

- Get down to their level, look them in the eyes, and welcome them to your field.

STEP 2 EYE TO EYE



STEP 3 HAND TO HAND



- Human beings are built to be relational.
- Life is all about relationships!
- When student-athletes come to your field, find some form of appropriate human contact and intentionally connect with them.

Coaching Point

- Teach your student-athletes how to shake someone's hand. This is an important life skill that most students don't learn.
- Develop a fun 'team' handshake.

Examples

As you welcome your student-athletes choose an appropriate way to greet them physically:

- Fist bump
- Elbow tap (COVID-friendly)
- Handshake
- Pat on the back or shoulder
- Have fun and create a special team handshake routine

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STEP 4 HEART TO HEART

- Student-athletes feel a sense of belonging when a coach intentionally connects with them.
- As you welcome your student-athletes onto your field, ask a question that connects with them at the heart level.
- Ask your student-athletes about something that interests them outside of football.

Coaching Point

- Make sure you respond in a positive, personable way, letting them know you hear them.
- Respond with empathy when appropriate. Allow them to respond from their heart—a sign of a safe environment.

Examples

- Ask them about their day or something that is going on in their life.
- Asks questions about their interests unrelated to football.
- Provide a sincere response.