

Honor Calls

Character is forged in times of trial when people display the moral courage and inner fortitude to do the right thing even if it's unpopular or against conventional wisdom. This strategy helps coaches/athletes process through their value system and gives them an opportunity to display those values in times of competition.

Overview



An honor call applies in any situation where an athlete or coach can “right a wrong.” For example an honor call in volleyball can happen when, in attempting to block a shot, the ball skims off the tip of the blocker’s finger and goes out of bounds. The official doesn’t see it and awards the ball to the blocker’s team. The athlete then self-reports to the official that she/he touched the ball. This now costs her/his team a point and the ball is rightfully given to the opposing team. This can be applied to “flopping” in soccer and basketball, telling your athletes to point your direction on a fumble in American football, or any other strategy that is done to influence the officials to make the call go your way. These may be great strategies to help you win, but they amount to deception for personal gain. Why not just tell them how to cheat on their classroom tests so they can get a better score? It's the same thing.

Honor calls protect the honor of the game and those playing the game. While introducing this idea, you can expect initial resistance. A good question to ask the athletes (and ourselves) would be, “How would we want the game to be called if there were no officials?”

This strategy gives coaches a great opportunity to talk about the moral courage it takes to do the RIGHT thing. This discussion can easily open the door for a coach to talk about demonstrating moral courage in other situations outside of sports, like when they see someone being bullied or sexually harassed etc.

Initial resistance will many times morph into unexpected joy because this is how the game is meant to be played (how life is meant to be lived.) Teaching athletes that honesty and integrity trump winning is a lesson that coaches need to teach. If a coach doesn’t teach these lessons, research shows that the longer athletes participate in sports... the more dishonest they will become.

	"To" Strategies	"Through" Strategies
2nd Dimension		
Motivation		
Confidence		
Emotions		
Team Cohesion		
Goal Setting		
3rd Dimension		
Identity		
Character	✓	✓
Significance		
Self-Worth		

Values		
Purpose		

*Because many 3D strategies have multiple level 2 & 3 implications, these checkmarks do not likely display their full scope of impact. We have tried to limit the number of checkmarks to the most obvious applications to make the planning process easier.

When will this strategy be executed?

☐ Pre-Season ☐ In-Season ☐ Post-Season ☐ Off-Season

Notes: