



3E

Transforming Athletes

*"Skills that last after the
ball stops bouncing."*

Captain's Cards



Team Captain Cards

A coach names you Team Captain. Now what?

"Team Captain" is more than a fancy title. It's an honor that a coach gives to a player whom the rest of the team respects and trust. This player serves as an extension of the coach and a leader for the entire team.

The 3E Team Captain Cards are designed to teach you what it means to be a captain. This deck provides every captain with the information and tips you need to succeed, regardless of the sport. Towel and water bottle not required.

The 3rd Element provides training to help athletes to be coachable, accountable and develop a team first mentality. To learn more about the visit us at the3rdelement.com.

Name: _____

School: _____

How do I currently contribute to my team's success as team captain?

1. _____

2. _____

What is one thing I can improve about my captain's skills? _____



Card 1: Help Your Coach

As team captain, **you are a critical bridge between your coaches and your teammates.** You can help your coach by setting a positive example for the rest of the team and reinforcing each practice's focus. It's also important that you let your coach know if you learn of something that might affect the team's performance.

Do's and Don'ts

- Communicate regularly with your coach to understand what you can do to:
 - o Reinforce the practice theme for the week
 - o Help address any specific issues or concerns
 - o Help make the team better, in general
- Communicate issues that you think your coach needs to be aware of in a discreet manner. Focus only on issues that might negatively impact the team or a specific player. Communicate positive things where you think the team is improving.
- Offer suggestions that you think might be helpful. Don't bring up problems unless you have an idea about how to make the situation better.
- Remember... you're not the coach. Don't act like one. Your teammates will resent you for it.

Game Plan

- ✓ Set up a weekly time to meet one-on-one with your coach, preferably at the beginning of the week
- ✓ Develop a weekly game plan together, so you can prepare how to best help the team with practice and game situations
- ✓ Help the coach to make each season fun, enriching and successful.
- ✓ Offer to help with youth/development programs or other activities important to the program.

What can you do?



Card 2: Show Your Teammates You Care

Showing your teammates how much they matter is a key part of being team captain and having them see you as a leader. In order for the team to do well, everyone needs to feel comfortable, excited, and appreciated.

The team's success is more important than your own.
Make sure your actions reflect this!

Do's and Don'ts

- **Always** make sure to put the team first. This can be really difficult at times, but it's critical to building a team that "Wins as One". Every person can contribute something important. Part of your job is to understand what that means for each individual player and make sure they understand it, as well.
- Good leaders consistently invite, inspire, and drive others toward greatness. Help your teammates if there are things they want to work on. Offer to stay after practice if necessary.
- Build a relationship with everyone on your team. Be a friend. The best way to kick this off is to simply start a conversation: talk to each member 1 on 1 in a casual way. Go beyond the sport--ask questions about family, friends, and plans for the summer or after graduation. Ask what they think the team could do to be better and take their suggestions to heart.

Game Plan

- ✓ Get to know one person a little better at each practice. Pick someone specific and partner with this person during drills. Leave the field or court together, talking. Make them feel appreciated. Choose a different teammate for each practice.
- ✓ Always be honest with your teammates. Make sure they never feel like you are putting your own interests ahead of the team's. Have their back at all times and celebrate their successes. This will help build trust between you and the rest of the group.
- ✓ Try to spend time with your teammates off of the court. Plan activities, attend an event together, or try hosting a dinner. Make sure everyone is invited.

What can you do?



Card 3: Always Bring Your "A" Game

Bring a positive attitude and your maximum effort to every practice and every game. Show up early and stay late. By choosing to work hard, you set an example for everyone else. This will inspire your teammates to push themselves to new levels and increase your credibility as a leader. **Keep in mind that every day, you either get better or you get worse, and it is your decision.**

Do's and Don'ts

- Take time to mentally prepare before every practice and every game. Decide in advance what your goals are and work hard to achieve them.
- Be confident in yourself. They made you captain for a reason.
- Push both yourself and your teammates to make the most of every workout.
- No matter how bad things are going, be a positive voice.
- Remind your team that today's hard work leads to tomorrow's celebrations. Every day, you make a choice between getting a little better or a little worse. Chose "better."
- Remind your teammates that the two things you can control are your attitude and your effort.

Game Plan

- ✓ Get your head in the game. Be mentally ready to compete in every practice and every game. Set goals for improvement.
- ✓ Challenge at least one teammate per day. For example, make a friendly wager to see if they can complete at least 4 out of 5 drills perfectly. See if you both can improve your times in conditioning.
- ✓ You don't have to be the loudest person, but you do need to encourage your teammates to bring their best every practice and game.
- ✓ Stay positive and let your passion for your sport shine through.

What can you do?



Card 4: Include Everyone

A team is a family. Everyone has an important role to play and deserves to feel like they belong to the group. As a captain, you need to make sure that everyone is included in all team activities. Every teammate has a voice and should feel comfortable giving feedback, offering suggestions for improvement, or speaking up if they see something of concern.

Do's and Don'ts

- Work to build positive relationships between team members, coaches, and managers.
- Communicate with your coaches and parents and seek their advice when you have problems. Ask for their opinions and see if they have any suggestions on how you and the team can improve.
- Older teammates are responsible for making sure younger team members feel like part of the team.
- Make sure everyone is included in everything, both in and out of practice. Cliques can really hurt the camaraderie of a team. They can creep in if all of the starters hang out only with each other or if the older players are not welcoming to the younger ones.

Game Plan

- ✓ Get to know each other. On the first day of practice, pair your younger teammates with an older buddy to help them feel welcome and valued. Mix it up daily or weekly to allow everyone on the team to get to know each other.
- ✓ Have fun. With the input of your coach, schedule a fun team building activity outside of practice.
- ✓ Communicate one purpose. Routinely remind your team that you are working towards a common goal that can only be achieved if you act as a united group. Don't forget to let the non-starters know that you appreciate their hard work and the support they provide from the bench.

What can you do?



Card 5: Communicate

As a team captain, effective communication is one of your most important tasks. Communication drives relationships, resolves conflicts, unites people working towards a common goal, and builds a championship culture. Great leaders tend to also be great communicators. You will use the communication skills you learn as captain for the rest of your life.

Do's and Don'ts

- Encourage your teammates with positive and proactive communication before a play rather than being critical afterwards.
- Be vocal during practice and games (e.g., plays, observations, the number of outs, insight into an opposing player) to help your team succeed.
- Remember that nobody makes mistakes on purpose. If you have to deliver a negative message, spin it in a way that makes the team better.
- Don't gossip, deliver the message directly to the person.
- If you have to deliver a personal message to a teammate, be sure to do so in a private setting and not in front of a group. Always respect the person receiving the message.

Game Plan

- ✓ The next time you notice a conflict, talk it out right away. Don't let it linger. Talk about solutions, keeping the focus on the team and the issue, not the individual.
- ✓ Avoid being part of any negativity. Remember that body language is communication too.
- ✓ Be sure to compliment teammates when you see them doing the right things or doing well. High five them!
- ✓ Find situations where you can communicate early and often during play. Speak proactively before the play happens and avoid negative reactions in general. Make sure everyone is on the same page.

What can you do?



Card 6: Be Mentally Tough

Remember: it's not if things go wrong, it's a matter of when they go wrong. As captain, your teammates will look to you for guidance and leadership in times of crisis. Become a model of mental toughness. Practice it every day. Play with emotion and passion, but try not to let your emotions get too high or too low.

Do's and Don'ts

- My bad! Be accountable during negative situations. Accept responsibility for your mistakes and move on – the play is over, and there's nothing you can do to change it. Encourage teammates to do the same.
- Maintain your composure and optimism despite any mistakes you or others might make. Your team will grow to trust you for it.
- You can't control your coach or the officials. If you think someone made a bad call, let it go. Communicate, get your team refocused, and move on the next play.
- Don't ever take shortcuts. For example, touch every line when doing sprints and make sure your teammates do it too!

Game Plan

- ✓ Practice mental toughness every day, until it becomes a habit. For example, make your bed every morning, run on and off the field/court, etc. The little things add up.
- ✓ When you make a mistake, learn from it and move on to the next play. Don't dwell on it.
- ✓ No matter how bad your day is, flip the switch when you walk onto the court/field. Exude positive energy. It motivates your team and intimidates your opponents.
- ✓ Rehearse the outcomes you desire in your head, before you practice or compete in a game. This will help to mentally prepare you for various situations you might encounter while playing.

What can you do?



Card 7: Be Courageous

Captains lead by example. **You need to step up when others will not.** Be courageous and have your teammates' back. Set lofty goals and work hard to achieve them. Trust is critical. You must be willing to hold teammates accountable to prepare, work hard, and adhere to the standards you set, but you also need to show that you believe in them. Your actions must reflect the values of the team.

Do's and Don'ts

- Do what's right! You know right from wrong. Never do anything that will hurt the team. This is especially important when it comes to team standards.
- Set the example. Recognize that if you want a unified team where everyone works together to win, it starts with you as the captain: your attitude, your commitment, your caring, your passion for excellence, and your dedication to winning. It starts with the example you set.
- Be strong and stop negative behavior. Sometimes issues like laziness, lack of commitment, or negative talk about coaches or practices can surface among your teammates.

Game Plan

- ✓ Play fearlessly. When you play to avoid mistakes, you only make more mistakes. Don't be afraid to make mistakes! They happen. Accept it, learn from it, and go!
- ✓ Defend your teammates like you would your own family. Stand up when you see someone being mistreated. It may not be the popular choice, but it's the right thing to do.
- ✓ Always help your teammates up when they're down, be it physically or emotionally. Show them you have their back!

What can you do?



Card 8: Be Consistent

As a leader, your teammates will naturally look to you for guidance, especially when times are tough. Being a captain is an “all the time” role. Teammates, coaches and fans are constantly observing your behavior, both on and off the field.

Do's and Don'ts

- Always be a calming force when things don't go well. Try to hide your frustration. If you're upset over a bad call or missed opportunity, take a second to regroup yourself and focus on the next play.
- Walk the talk. Be consistent in what you say and do.
- Keep your teammates focused on the task at hand and maintain composure when things don't go your way. Rally the team and look forward to the next opportunity.
- Be confident in yourself and your abilities. You were selected as captain for a reason! Before anyone else will believe in you, you have to believe in yourself.
- Be selfless. Give others credit when due and share the glory.

Game Plan

- ✓ Routinely try to be the first person to arrive at games and practices. Then, be the last one to leave.
- ✓ Routinely remind your teammates of your team's goals and standards as the season progresses.
- ✓ Look for times when things seem flat and practice rallying your teammates. Do this on a daily basis.
- ✓ Support your coach's decisions.
- ✓ Cheer for your teammates and congratulate them on good plays. Take responsibility for mistakes, both your own and those of the team as a whole.
- ✓ Be consistent in applying all of the these captain's cards.

What can you do?

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