

## Thoughts From The Dugout



### The "I" in TEAM

I wish I had a dollar for every time some coach has professed the wonderful words "There is no I in Team". Heck, I have even used it myself at times. But as I sit back and ponder this thought, it occurred to me that there is an "I" in team. There has to be an "I". The team is made up collectively of a number of "I's". So where are they? Where are they hiding in there?

They are invisible to the naked eye, but they are truly the most important aspect of the TEAM succeeding. They are at the very core of the success of the team. If they are not there, in no way will the team succeed. They are the glue and foundation by which the team is built and ensures the teams success. With that, I bring you the "Invisible I's in TEAM":

**I MUST PREPARE.** Every individual member of the team must prepare themselves to the best of their abilities to do their job. A team is only as good as its weakest link. A cliché yes, but true nonetheless. If every member of the team does not do their part in preparing themselves, there is no way for the collective team to succeed at the highest-level possible. At some point, in some way, every member of the team will be called upon to help ensure success.

**I MUST SACRIFICE.** Every member of the team must be willing to sacrifice for the good of the whole. The level of sacrifice will vary, but regardless, each member of the team must find and accept their role in the success. This sacrifice can be on many different levels. It might be playing a different position, it might be becoming a role player instead of a "star", and it might be the support system for another player who needs you. Whatever it is, are you willing to do it for the good of the team?

**I MUST LET GO OF MY EGO.** The team is bigger than any one individual player. Regardless of their level of ability, there is not one player alive that can go out and compete by themselves in a team sport and be victorious. At some point, in some way, they need each and every other player on that team for them to be individually successful.

**I MUST FIND JOY IN ANOTHER PERSONS SUCCESS.** At some level, other teammates must succeed if we are collectively to succeed as a team. A pitcher can go out and throw a no hitter striking out every batter. But if we don't score any runs, we will not win the game. We should not be jealous of another person's success, but rather we should embrace it, support it and do everything in our power to HELP it.

So without the Invisible "I's", all you will be left with is a cute slogan that sounds good in a speech or looks good hanging on the wall. Without the Invisible "I's", you will not have the very basis by which this "belief" works and ensures everyone's success.

While on the surface this belief might be appropriate for your specific sport, there are also some things, which are far bigger than this. This same process and belief is also the very fabric by which our most important Teams are built - FAMILY and FRIENDS.

Today you might be surrounded by teammates for a season or more, but your Family and Friends are your teammates for life. What you practice in that search to be league champions, regional champions or National champions must also be applied to the teams that are much bigger. For these people are your teammates for the Season of Life.