# The

LSU ULTIMATE Way

# The LSU Ultimate Way

# **Beginning a Movement**

The LSU Ultimate Way is a doctrine that describes how operations are run at LSU Ultimate. However, this particular document is different than the constitution of the club. Instead of rules, regulations, and bylaws, The LSU Ultimate Way describes the personal, cultural, and developmental strategies of the club and how members should strive to perform on the field and carry themselves off of it. The LSU Ultimate Way is derived from a combination of systematic processes formed by the best minds behind the best organizations in professional sports. These individuals and teams of individuals took a team that was stuck, both in development and on field success as well as culturally in the locker room. The LSU Ultimate Way is the process by which the team as a whole look to enact cultural change for the better, place a focus on player and personal development, and create a program that has sustained success.

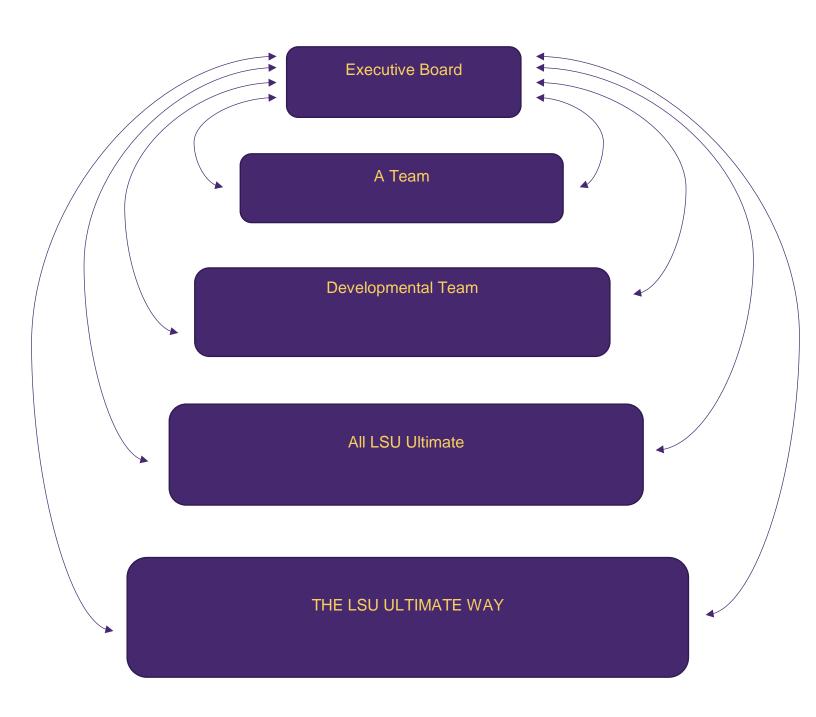
The LSU Ultimate Way lends itself to three major pillars for its success:

- Developing Exemplary Leadership
- Creating Positive Cultural Change
- Improving Performance

These three pillars will be seen consistently throughout the LSU Ultimate Way and serve as an overarching thematic guideline for everything that is discussed.

# **How We Build**

The LSU Ultimate Way is more than just words on a page. It is about the people involved within the organization—from top to bottom. The process by which The LSU Ultimate Way works is demonstrated by the diagram on the next page.



# **How We Build**

The LSU Ultimate Way is the base from which the organization needs to be built. This serves as a starting point for how the entire LSU Ultimate Club should operate. As it moves up, the developmental team should also operate by these principles and standards. As these values are instilled at the developmental level, those players will eventually develop into the players that lead the A Team in years following. Finally, at the top, the executive board needs to instill and enforce the core values that the LSU Ultimate Way describes.

It is important to remember that the LSU Ultimate way is a living, breathing doctrine. It embodies values beginning from the top of the organization all the way to the bottom. These founding members of the new culture create the framework for how the organization will look for years to come. The next step of the process is finding other leaders and coaches that fit the vision planned in the LSU Ultimate Way. Finally, once the leadership and coaches are in place, the team must find players that also embody the LSU Ultimate Way. Rebuilding a program in a positive way and portraying a positive culture does not happen overnight. It is important to maintain an urgent sense of patience. What this means is that there is a specific process to follow in rebuilding a culture positively. Each step must be taken or steps will begin to fall through the cracks. That being said, a team should not have to wait to be successful. In Ultimate, there is no such thing as "tanking" for draft picks. In Ultimate, it is important to build players in their development so that players progress on an expedited timeline. Thus, there must be patience for the process to work, but there needs to be an urgency by leaders, captains, and coaches to get the process started.

# **Creating The Buy In**

In order for the LSU Ultimate Way to take effect and for the process to get started quickly, there must be buy-in created for the new culture. The LSU Ultimate Way will begin with the leaders of the organization immediately behind the cause. Following them, it is important to get the leaders of the team to buy in so that there is a connected effort to get others to buy in as well. It is vital to immediately discuss the culture that leaders will be buying into. The LSU Ultimate Way has a cultural ideal of Competitive Positivity, Lack of Energy Vampires, and remembering that in Tough Love, Love Comes First. Secondly, for the leadership, it is important to have a "Team Mantra" for the season—something everyone can wrap their heads around, something meaningful, and something the team can rally behind. Below are examples, and an extended example is on the next page.

Everyone In.

Made To Reign

Better Together

# **Creating The Buy In—Mantras**

This is an example of creating buy in that is vital for a team to come together and be successful. The mantra "Everyone In" is something easy for players to get behind because of its obvious message of positivity. It is also meaningful so that players can buy into the message: it is all inclusive, promotes teamwork, and serves as a pledge to be "all in" for the season.



Below, is the player's aspect of the buy-in mantra. In the same background and font as the team-wide mantra, we have one word written: IN. Below that one word is the player's signature symbolizing their commitment to the team and the mission. The possibilities to make this design go forward are truly endless. These pages can be printed and put into a binder that the team carries to tournaments, each can be minimized and placed onto a poster for the team to bring, and players could use the photos as their social media avatars.



# **Creating Positive Cultural Change**

After finding your team's mantra for the season and getting the team's buy in, the shift in cultural change can begin. It is important to remember that The LSU Ultimate Way is more than words. It's 100% about the people—from top to bottom. The process of cultural change has multiple key points for it to end in success:

- Cultural change comes down to how deep everyone digs to connect to the process and get connected to each other.
- It is of the utmost importance to take pride in teaching the game of Ultimate the correct way—The LSU Ultimate Way. Everyone understands the rules and follows them. Everyone abides by Spirit of the Game. Everyone is shown respect.
- Cultural change is dependent upon how committed the organization is to the change.
- Cultural change will be exemplified in how the members treat each other.
- Cultural change will be continuous because of how hard we work to perfect it.

Cultural change is shown among each of the aforementioned points, but also extends beyond them. When the culture of an organization becomes broken, it is up to the new regime to instill the positive values of the LSU Ultimate Way into—first

Care about winning, care about each other, develop relationships

and foremost—the returning members and then the new members. This is done by placing an immediate focus on the people. Placing importance on building relationships with individuals and providing empathy with the people you surround yourself with moves the organization in the right direction. This positively directed move allows for a closer-knit team, a team that can grow with *each other* instead of around *one person*, and a more positive environment. Thus, it is important to care about winning, but to care about one another and develop those relationships at the same time.

Organizations begin to develop a negative, toxic culture when individual needs take precedent over the needs of the organization as a whole. This typically manifests when character is compromised for talent. When people within an organization have a "me first" mentality, it often places more unnecessary stress on those around them. The LSU Ultimate Way emphasizes a strong character and positive attitude. These two principles will not be compromised for talent. Negative attitudes and poor character diminish the successes of any organization by destroying the environment every other member has worked to build.

The following sections describe the new cultural ideal described by The LSU Ultimate Way, which new leadership and players will be working to build in order to make LSU Ultimate a vision of sustained success.

### **COMPETITIVE POSITIVITY**

Not compromising character for talent and looking to formulate a positive cultural environment does not mean there is a lack of competitiveness. Instead, there is an incredible amount of competitiveness, but it reveals itself in a positive, productive way. The LSU Ultimate Way is characterized by players and coaches being competitive, but in a way that builds results positively. Competition and a competitive nature at practices is often extremely positive. This is portrayed by players pushing one another to be better by offering advice, huddling together to talk before a point or during a timeout, and beginning criticisms in a positively constructed way (i.e. "I really like that you did 'x' there, if you do 'y' next time, I think it could be even better"). However, competitiveness showing itself in a negative way does not provide a productive environment for cultural change. Yelling at players, disrespecting teammates and coaches, and a "me first" mentality does not allow for development of a team, development of a player, or development of a new culture.

#### **NO ENERGY VAMPIRES**

Teams and organizations that are in need of a culture change often experience energy vampires within the organization. An energy vampire is someone who allows a poor attitude and character suck the energy out of the environment they are in. The LSU Ultimate Way places an emphasis on not having energy vampires within the organization in order to maintain a positive, healthy environment where the team as a whole can grow to new heights in terms of potential and success.

### IN TOUGH LOVE, LOVE COMES FIRST

As stated previously, The LSU Ultimate Way will utilize a person-first mentality to achieve success. This requires accountability on all individuals throughout the entire organization. Accountability measures often embody "tough love" tactics where the emphasis is placed on the tough. For successful teams and organizations, this is the opposite. Individuals within the organization will respond to tough love best when the love comes first. This is done through building strong relationships with others and expressing genuine care for the others you are surrounding yourself with. People will be held accountable and accept consequences when the relationship is strong and the care for them as a person comes initially in the process. Teams and organizations begin to fracture when the human element is disposed of in order to make a point about consequence. The key is building powerful and strong relationships with each person so that "tough" is not the embodying characteristic of "tough love".

### **BUILDING A BETTER TEAMMATE**

These cultural ideals that characterize the LSU Ultimate Way will ultimately be personified by the members of the team. This personification is shown through the creation of great teammates. By creating great teammates, the team becomes one united front because of their dedication to one another. Becoming a great teammate requires a devotion to the process, which includes multiple aspects of what it means to be the best teammate possible.

## No On-Field Negativity

- If you're upset, one of the best things to do as a course of action is to find a teammate and give them a compliment. This immediately diffuses your anger and channels it into something positive.
- Find a teammate or coach that can help you regain your center. If your first instinct is to yell or get angry about something, remember that doing so helps no one. It creates a vastly negative environment that is never useful. Find a teammate or coach that you feel comfortable expressing yourself to. This diffuses any sense of anger you have instead of spreading it to the team. There is NO shame in asking for help.

# Body Language is Important

While emotional, vocal outbursts are immediate and relatively short-lived, body language can be something that carries over. Being a great teammate means that even when you should be down and out about something, you have to be upbeat about the possibility for something greater down the line.

## Humility

 Great teammates have a ton of humility. If you are consumed with yourself, you won't do what's best for the team.

### Honesty

- The best teammates are the ones that are honest. Oftentimes this is mistaken for being rude. However, honesty will help an individual and ultimately the team grow as a collective unit.
- The best teammates also have to be honest with themselves. There may come a point when you have to look in the mirror and ask yourself am I being honest with myself about my ability? My role? My effort? Keeping honest with yourself allows players to pinpoint areas that they can improve upon, thus improving the team.

## Reliability

Great teammates are reliable. Reliable teammates are the same person every day;
 someone that has the ability to be counted on day in and day out.

Reliable teammates also don't carry the burdens of yesterday into the present day.
 This means that they have a short memory when it comes to problems and are able to correct what went wrong quickly and quietly without bringing attention to him or herself.

### Communication

- Individuals should strive to be teammates that communicate positively. By communicating positively, there is a far greater chance that you will actually be heard.
- Communication should also be direct and early. Indirect communication creates a bevy of unnecessary problems that come with "he said, she said" scenarios and instances of gossip. By being direct, teammates are able to get their point across to individuals with them knowing it is the truth coming from a firsthand source. Early communication disallows problems from lingering. By communicating early, teammates can solve problems together without any added animosity due to passed time.

# Problem Solving

o Great teammates look for solutions without complaining. By engaging in active problem solving, teammates can work together to fix any issues quickly and efficiently. By not complaining, the best teammates offer a strong, united front to fix any problem that comes their way. Great teammates also often ask themselves "how does what I'm doing help the collective effort?".

### Sacrifice

A key component with sacrifice is understanding that no task is beneath you. As a great teammate, you prove this by showing that you are dedicated to the team first and foremost. For example, setting up fields is a tedious task before every practice. However, great teammates won't complain when asked because no task is beneath them and they understand that it is something that needs to be done for the group.

The best teammates also sacrifice for the betterment of the group. There will come a time when you as an individual may need to make a sacrifice for someone else. A great teammate will not falter when this opportunity to sacrifice presents itself. For example, there was a time when a teammate's laces broke on his cleats. I knew I wouldn't be playing much due to the importance of the tournament and my position on the team as an older, veteran player, so I took the laces out of my cleats to give to my teammate. This is an example of where sacrifice can truly better the team.

# Dealing With Change

When the ultimate goal is to win a championship in a highly competitive field, there
will be adversity to be faced. There will be challenges that were not anticipated.

Being the best teammate you can be, it is your job to face this adversity head on and
help your teammates face the adversity as well. It is important that you trust the
process because the process is fearless.

## Engagement

- o "Be present, not perfect"
- It is not necessary to be perfect. That is a losing battle because no one is perfect.
   However, you can be present in every facet as a great teammate.
- It is important to be involved in every aspect of the game as a teammate. While you may not be playing in the moment, your teammates can still use your help on the field. It is important to be engaged from the start of the game to the end of the game. Every point, every play.

These processes by which we will create cultural change in The LSU Ultimate Way are intricate and complex. However, when there is cooperation by a collective to change the culture, the process becomes far easier. Creating a positive culture must start at the top, which is why developing exemplary leadership is a pillar of strength for The LSU Ultimate Way.

# **Developing Exemplary Leadership**

Strong leadership is a key factor in creating a system that prioritizes sustained success.

Leadership must be willing to abide by the same principles he or she is asking the team as a whole to abide by and, in most cases, must hold those principles in a higher esteem because of their position.

Leadership within The LSU Ultimate Way begins with an attitude. The LSU Ultimate Attitude is positive, powerful, action-oriented, and resilient. It is an attitude that says, "I am" and "I do". It is an attitude that says, "No matter what happens, I will continue to grow and I will always find a way". These descriptors form the overarching themes by which The LSU Ultimate Way wants their leaders to develop, whether it is on or off of the field.

### **POSITIVE**

"The LSU Ultimate Attitude is *Positive*". Leaders of any successful organization or team *must* portray positivity even in the direst cases. Leaders are the face of the franchise, so to speak. Because of this, they must put on a face of positivity to their peers, teammates, and coaches. This means leaders must remain positive despite any negativity they may feel. Negativity spreads disdain and toxicity when it comes from a player level, but when it comes from leadership, it spreads twice as fast.

So, how do leaders remain positive when it seems like the only outcomes are negative?

- ❖ Take a step, take a breath. If you, as a leader, begin to feel negatively, take a step back for a moment and take a breath. Oftentimes, it is the stress of being a leader that allows negativity to find its way onto your shoulders. Take a moment to think whether this is the time or place to spread negativity or if it would be better served to place a positive spin on whatever it is you feel negatively about. In the vast majority of cases, it's the latter.
- ❖ Ask for help. Find your confidant. Find a friend. Ask for help. Take a moment and pull someone you feel comfortable with aside and describe the situation. Explain why you feel negatively and ask for ways you can flip it and make the situation positive.

- ❖ Remind yourself of the end goal. Typically, it is really easy to feel negative when the present doesn't seem to be lining up the way it should be in your eyes. Keep your sight on the end goal. The end goal could be months away or one point away, but the constant is that there is always some amount of time in between the present and the end goal. It may not be much time, but there is time. You need to remind yourself that in the time you have, it will probably be better served to remain positive.
- Can I control this? There are going to be things that will be out of your control. It is important to remember that in most cases, you won't be able to control things even when you feel like you should be able to. You cannot control what others do, you can only control how you act/react toward them. Stay positive, remind yourself of what you can control. Controlling your attitude is the biggest thing you can do to help your team keep a positive outlook.

### **POWERFUL**

"The LSU Ultimate Attitude is *Powerful*". Power within an organization or team is often misconstrued. Within the LSU Ultimate Way power should be portrayed with respect, a sense of responsibility, and being knowledgeable. A powerful leader shows respect to every individual within the organization. The respect shown by leaders will move and show itself throughout the organization as a whole. This leads into responsibility. It is vital that leaders adhere to the responsibility of keeping the culture strong within the organization and feel the responsibility to abide by and spread The LSU Ultimate Way. It is imperative that leaders take this responsibility seriously because they are at the forefront of the organization's movement. It is also imperative that they ensure that others are following the LSU Ultimate Way. If they find people are not following The LSU Ultimate Way, powerful leaders will take the opportunity to tell those people, "That is not how we do things here".

#### **ACTION-ORIENTED**

"The LSU Ultimate Attitude is *Action-Oriented*". Leadership must have the attitude of someone who is action-oriented. Being action-oriented requires leaders to be decisive, have the ability to plan, and follow through with those plans. Without concrete plans and action steps to follow through, the rest of the organization will feel disorganized and lack trust. By creating a plan, getting input from the entire organization, creating action steps, and following through, organizations remain strong through a stepwise method to reach goals.

#### RESILIENT

"The LSU Ultimate Attitude is *Resilient*". In any organization, on any team, something will go wrong. There is no way around it. Something WILL go wrong. It is important to prepare for that beforehand. Be proactively resilient. That way, when something does go wrong, everyone will be prepared and it will not come as a surprise. Resiliency has multiple meanings. However, for the purpose of The LSU Ultimate Way, we will define it as being able to overcome adversity with the principles instilled within us through the LSU Ultimate Way and overcoming said adversity as one unit, together.

# **Developing Leaders**

Leaders must embody every aspect of The LSU Ultimate Way and must pass down their knowledge and example to younger players that will become the leaders of the future. However, it is important to remember that leadership is a process. That process presents itself as such:

Before you can lead, you must establish trust. Before you can establish trust, you must establish a personal relationship with people.

Potential leaders must establish personal relationships first and foremost. Establishing these relationships can be done by being accessible, talking with people, being a positive role model, and putting yourself in positions to help others when they need it—on or off the field. Once personal relationships are established, trust comes next. When there is a sense of trust, leaders and non-leaders are able to have a back-and-forth—a conversation about skill, strategy, and direction without the need of one side being "right". Along with the back-and-forth conversation, trust on the field will be present as well, creating a tightly knit scheme in which players have one another's backs. Once that trust is established, then you have the ability to lead. As previously stated, leadership is not an overnight process; it takes ample time. However, once leadership is put in place initially, the steps can be put in place early on to create new leaders for the future success of the organization and team.

# **Improving Performance**

Performance improvement is the final piece to The LSU Ultimate Way. By placing an investment in improving player performance, LSU Ultimate will create a system in which players will develop to maximum capacity over the course of their Ultimate careers. Like much of the other important aspects of The LSU Ultimate Way, performance improvement begins with core principles that are adopted by leadership, then passed down throughout the organization.

Core Principles of Performance Improvement and Player Development:

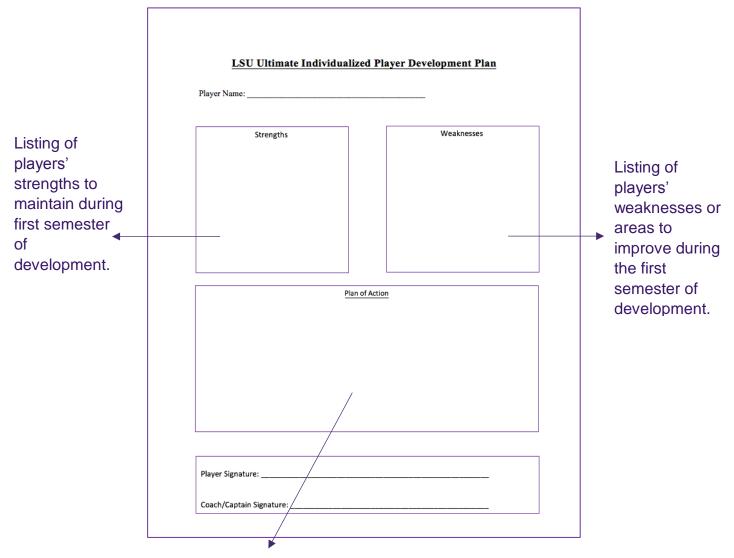
- Treat the development of every player as if we are making a personal investment in them.
- Stay objective in evaluating players' strengths and weaknesses in order to devise the most thorough and precise plan for development.
- Continually challenge ourselves to better communicate our teaching methods.
- Place organizational goals above personal goals.
- Our goal is to reach Nationals

#### **INVESTING IN PLAYERS**

The first aspect in performance improvement and player development is to invest in the players that we have on our team. Investing in players means placing an individualized focus on each player with evaluations, individualized coaching, and being available. By investing in *all* of our players, we allow for the development of *all* players instead of a select few players that have "star potential". Investing in players will also increase the ability of our team to retain players as the season moves on and with each passing season. The next step in Player Development and Performance Improvement is directly related to an investment in players—Individualized Player Development Plans.

#### **PLANNING AND EVALUATING**

Planning for and evaluating players will prove essential in the development of players in the future. At the beginning of the season, each player should be evaluated by the coaching and captain staff. These evaluations should take place in a one-on-one fashion where players are allowed to listen and hear what the coaching and captain staff thinks their strengths and weaknesses are. These evaluations should be written and discussed and then used to formulate a development plan. Each player should receive an Individualized Player Development Plan (IPD) at the beginning of the season following the evaluation. An example of a IPD can be found on the following page.



A step-wise action plan to help players improve upon their weaknesses with checkpoints throughout the semester to determine progress.

IPDs will be a multifaceted and multistep approach to enhance player development and performance improvement. This is a new development strategy to help each player improve upon aspects of their game while helping the team as a whole simultaneously.

- 1. Evaluations will take place during the first few weeks/during the tryout process.
- 2. Players and Coaches/Captains will meet together to discuss the evaluations.
- 3. Coaches and Captains will put together a IPD for each player based upon the evaluations.
- 4. Players and Coaches/Captains will meet together to discuss the timeline of checkpoints on progress.
- 5. Progress checkpoints will take place over the course of the semester (following tournaments, monthly, etc.)
- 6. At the end of the semester, a final progress checkpoint will occur and a re-evaluation period will take place, in which a new IPD will be completed for the next semester.

Following the implementation of Individualized Player Development Plans, there must be a shift to the team as a whole entity. As a team, The LSU Ultimate Way places a focus and importance on doing the simple things better. Doing simple better means focusing on the fundamental aspects of the game and doing those better than everyone else. Throwing, catching, making the correct cut at the correct time, and valuing the disc are all examples of simple parts of the game that LSU Ultimate must do better.

Along with fundamentals, the currency in Ultimate is information. We've seen constantly that David can beat Goliath. How is that done? Utilizing information. By scouting teams, we are able to understand what each particular team is looking to run systematically and also what they are looking to exploit. It is also vital to scout yourself. Not only to find what weaknesses to sure up, but to look critically at what other teams see and counter their moves before they can make them. It's a constant chess match that we have to start winning.

As players follow their plans and fundamentals are emphasized, the team will improve alongside the players as they develop. While the players have individual goals to meet, the team must also meet goals as the season moves from pre-season to the regular season and then to the post-season.

### **MEETINGS AND GOALS**

For the team as a whole, there must be a team improvement strategy that is coherent to everyone from top to bottom. This will begin with a simple strategy for meetings and goals. The team should only have three total team meetings within The LSU Ultimate Way. The first is at the beginning of the season/fall split; the second is at the beginning of the spring; and the third is before the postseason begins. Three meetings allow for simplified discussions and a re-energizing of players before important times during the season.

The goals we set for ourselves should be BIG. There is no use in setting goals that are too small or easy to achieve. Setting big goals gives our team the ability to shoot high, but understand that it may not happen all at once. Individual goals can be smaller, team and organization goals should be large.

# **Conclusion**

The LSU Ultimate Way is a living, breathing document put together by the leadership of LSU Ultimate in an effort to create an organization that has sustained success. Each year, The LSU Ultimate Way should be evaluated by the leadership regime and changes should be made accordingly. It should also be noted that The LSU Ultimate Way should also include documentation of how each aspect of gameplay should be completed with the team as a whole. This includes how a vertical stack should look, how a handler should move, etc. Every detail of every aspect of the game should be discussed so that each individual in the organization has a hand in sharing their thoughts on the way the organization operates from a holistic perspective.

Finally, The LSU Ultimate Way has been derived from a multitude of professional sports teams that have a history of positive culture, sustained success, and high prestige.

# My Coaching Philosophy

My coaching philosophy is simple, but made up of multiple parts. I believe that building a great team starts with a system and the system starts with the players. I believe that you should build a team with the right players, not necessarily the best ones. I believe that respect is not earned—it should be given to everyone until they don't deserve it anymore. I believe that there should be a constant building of a relationship between the coaches and players. I believe that relationship begins with honesty and trust.

This philosophy can be easily seen throughout The LSU Ultimate Way and will be seen through how I plan to operate during the season. The following section is how I perceive the season going and some words of wisdom I aim to live by during the year.

#### **PLANNING THE YEAR**

- Leadership Buy In
  - Get Leadership to buy in to The LSU Ultimate Way
  - Begin planning 2018-19 Strategic Plan
- Strong Recruitment
  - o Fliers, Cards
  - Top Players at table sits
  - Use current player networks
  - Begin building relationships with interested players

### ❖ FALL

- Team interest meeting
  - Describe LSU Ultimate Way
- Fall League
  - Look to have a large roster
  - Development oriented
  - Use the fall for a purpose—Build depth
  - Describe Weight Workouts
  - Create Pod System based on schedules

# Respect 70:

Respect the 70 yards of the field we play on.
Run Hard. Defend
Completely. Execute.

Don't Let The Pressure Exceed The Pleasure.

- Fundamentals
  - o Do Simple Better
  - Make the boring fun—Find ways to make mundane fundamentals enjoyable
  - Player Evaluations and Development Plans
- Tournaments
  - We should attempt to go to 2 X/Y tournaments, and 1-2 A/B tournaments
  - This allows newer players to build skills

#### ❖ SPRING

- Narrow Focus
- Large Tournaments
- Sprint Workouts
- Things to Try
  - Theme Travel
  - Individualized Warm Ups
  - Late Arrival
  - Practice Breaks (After tough weeks/tournaments)
- Togetherness
  - Weekly Dinner hosted by coach/captain
  - Sunday Pre-Practice Breakfast
  - Study Groups

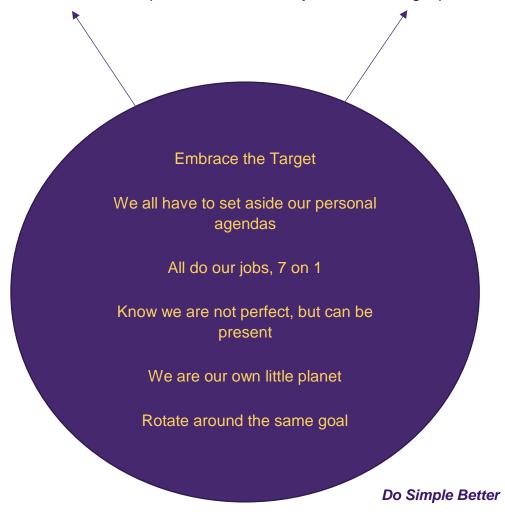
7=20; Seven guys playing hard will get us to the final 20 spots come May.

DNBAFF: Do Not Be A
Fucking Fan; take
emotion out of the
critical decision making
process

Finally, these are some things I want to emphasize during the year:

- ✓ Veteran players should not be harsh to young players, mistakes will be made, let them learn.
- ✓ Don't coach the instincts out of players. I think there is too often a habit for coaches to look at a particular play a player makes and coach that instinct out of them. Let's break that mold. Encourage players to be bold.
- ✓ Pre-game work is excessive. Players should get their different throws, get their legs under them, stretch out…but they don't need to be running themselves ragged before a game.

- **Expectations**: Strong belief that something will happen in the future
- **Pressure**: A motivator. A positive. An indicator you are in the right place.



"Change before you have to"

"Communication creates collaboration. Big ears are better than big egos. When you're not listening, ask good questions." The Process is FEARLESS

The Process Lacks Emotion

The Process is The Moment

The Process is The Mental Anchor

The Process Simplifies The Task