

CHAPTER 4: FIND YOUR ROLE

“Where do I fit?”

No two games are the same. As different players of various ages and skill levels enter and leave the game, remaining players must change their styles to fit the situations.

Sometimes you'll be asked to do more, other times less, depending on the flow of a game that day, your skills, and the skills of the current opponent. Each player has a role on the team, a part to play. Find the role that best suits your team for each given moment. It may not be the same each time (this goes back to being flexible).

“Who am I?”

Try to figure out quickly what you can and can't do as a player each time a new game begins. The answer should come not just from

what you typically do well and not so well, but what your current teammates and opponents are able to do as players, too.

Maybe one game you'll occupy a busy position and handle the ball quite a bit. Another game may call for you to have less activity with the ball but may call for you to handle other jobs well, such as defense instead of scoring.



Coach's Tip:

No matter what position you are playing make sure to pay attention during game action. Always know where the ball is for strategic and safety reasons.

PLAYER TYPES:

There are three player types. Let's look at each one. Can you find the level you're at in each of the games you like to play?

"I don't really know how or haven't played much but would like to join the game."

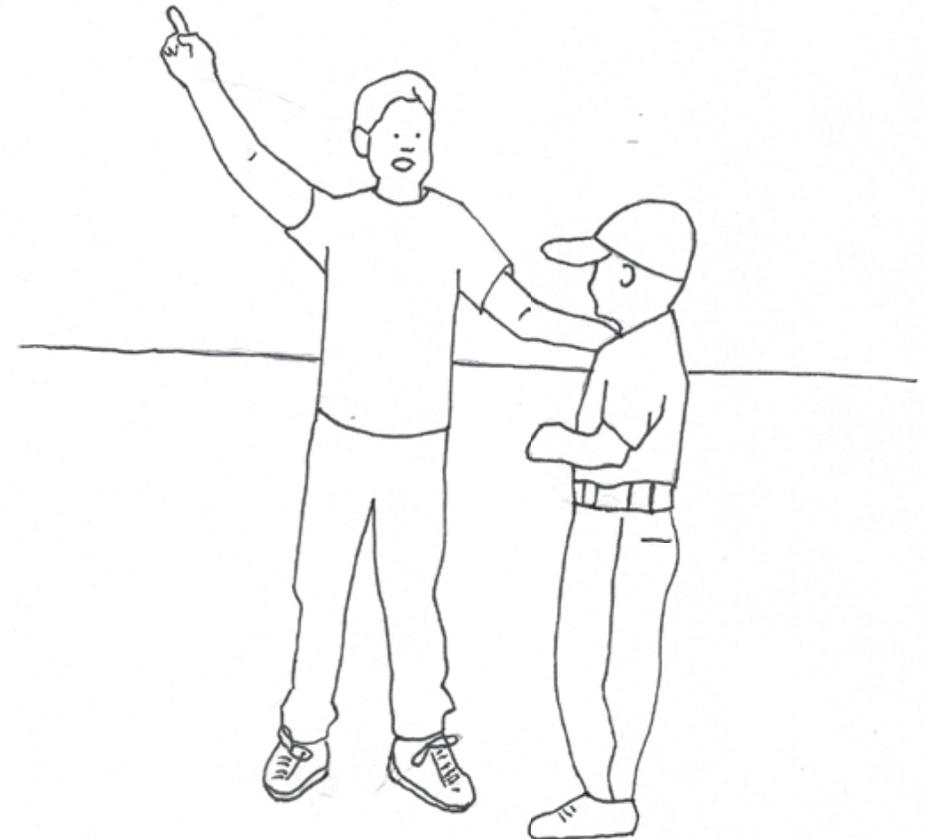
Type 1: Rookie—*Rookies* are new to the game and are still learning the rules and how to play. Even experienced players were rookies once. Learning how to play well takes time and practice.

Rookies shouldn't be forced to take on big responsibilities. Some rookies have played the game before, know the rules, and can play, but they lack experience. Rookies sometimes forget rules or how to do things they already know. As rookies play more, those mistakes

usually happen less often. It's best for rookies to take on main roles only when they're ready to handle them. **"I know how to play."**

Type 2: Veteran—*Veterans* are experienced players who know how to play and have done so many times before. You can only be a veteran by playing a lot.

Veterans are able to take on main roles thanks to their advanced knowledge and experience. They'll help teams play well by not making the same mistakes rookies may make. Veterans should be patient with rookies and help them by offering advice and encouragement during the action.



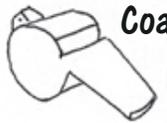
“I can help with the harder stuff.”

Type 3: Leader—Leaders not only play well but also inspire their teammates to play better, too. Leaders are great examples of how to be a good teammate. They help, teach, encourage, and support their teammates, even when the team makes mistakes. They think about the team first, not themselves, and other players look up to leaders.

Leaders sometimes give out jobs and other assignments to teammates, but they do so to make the team play at its best. They make sure all of the players are involved, because they know a great team is one where everyone contributes.

Rookies can be leaders, but it’s rare, because they’re often still learning many of the basics of a game as they play it. Leaders don’t have to be veterans, but experience helps anyone become a leader.

Whatever their experience, leaders must earn their positions. Leaders handle *pressure roles* for the team, like the big shot or the big kick, when winning or losing depends on it.



Coach’s Tip:

Being bossy and telling others what to do won’t make you a leader. It may even make others angry with you. You must prove you play well and can help others on the team before you become a leader.

BLACKBOARD:

The type of player you are may change with each game. To figure out your playing type each game:

1. be honest about what skills you have for the game compared to your opponents;
2. recognize the skills your teammates have, too (are you a rookie, veteran, or leader with that group?); and
3. try to find the role that best suits you and the team.

After giving yourself this test in your mind, you’ll end up with either a main role or a supporting role, like actors and actresses in movies. Those with main roles may be more part of the action and pressure moments. Those who take on supporting roles are called upon to help out, but not as often.

To succeed over and over, a team needs all its players, including main and supporting roles. All players must do their jobs well in order to make a team super strong and hard to beat!

It doesn’t matter if you’re a rookie, a veteran, or a leader, a player with a main role or a supporting one—be ready. You never know. Sometimes, winning the game will depend on you!

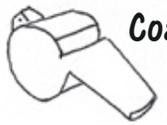
“Gimme the ball. I can do it!”

As we just discussed, main roles often come with more pressure attached to them during *crunch time*. Crunch time is a critical moment near the end of a game when quick decision making and success are needed in order to win. Failure in crunch time means the team may risk losing the entire game.

For example, the score is very close and the game is almost over. You have the ball! If you score, your team will win. If you miss, your team will lose. Are you ready to take “the big shot”?

Are you ready to accept that how you perform during this one moment may decide who wins or loses? If you’re ready to accept that you may fail, then you can take on a main role. If you’re worried that you’ll make a mistake that will cost the game and upset your teammates, then you aren’t ready for a main role yet.

Learning how to relax during crunch time and accept success and failure in this crucial point takes time and experience. Don’t expect to feel comfortable as a player in crunch time overnight.



Coach’s Tip:

During any game, always do what’s best for the team. This could mean taking on a bigger role or a less involved role than you normally do.

CHAPTER 4 REVIEW:

“FIND YOUR ROLE”—THE TOP FIVE KEYS:

1. Roles may change with each new playing group.
2. Rookies are new to the game.
3. Veterans have experience and advanced knowledge.
4. Leaders play well and help others around them feel relaxed and play well, too.
5. Take the Role Test. Are you a rookie, a veteran, or a leader? Will you have a main role during the game or a supporting role?