

## OLYMPIC CHEMISTRY

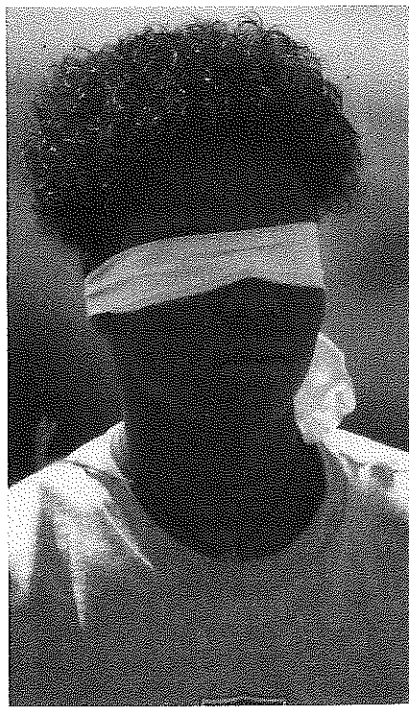
Leading up to the Olympics, we all knew we had an obligation for the team to remain positive and united. Colleen Hacker played a major role in creating positive team chemistry. She did a myriad of exercises with us to remind us how valuable each player was to the team and how we need everyone to get the job done. You cannot play the game by yourself, and she showed us that the beauty of being part of a team is that what you can accomplish together far exceeds what you can achieve on your own. Maybe you can work to have your team participate in team-building activities, or talk with your coach about ways to help your team appreciate the uniqueness of being part of a team. There are many simple activities that require teamwork, where you can come to appreciate each other.

"The main thing Colleen Hacker helped with was team chemistry," says Tiff Roberts. "She played a huge role in how close our team became. We worked in small groups and had to accomplish a goal. Afterward, we realized we never would have gotten that done without teamwork. She taught us what it takes to be supportive of ourselves. When we did a team-bonding exercise, Joy Fawcett would really stand out. Joy listened to everyone's opinion, and then she'd put them all together. Through the exercise everybody got to point out something good about everybody else. It might seem rather trivial that you need somebody to say you did a good job, but everybody needs that. And when it comes from these people, it really means something, because they have to count on you everyday.

"Each one of the players on our team has something special," adds Tiffany. "And when you put them all together, it's awesome. It's really unique to teams like ours who are at such an elite level because if everybody had it, everybody would be doing it."

Good team chemistry is difficult to touch, and it's important for us to understand that. Sometimes we can lose sight of our team as a unit and see it only as a collection of individuals. We have to hold on to chemistry, preserve it and really take care of it. We can't just let it go by the wayside. Remember, it's an active process and choice.

"Team chemistry ranks up there with the four pillars," says Shannon Higgins Cirovski. "It's hard to be successful if your team doesn't get along. If you're in it for yourself, that is not the right reason."



*"Leadership takes many forms. It's important to develop your own leadership style. Know your strengths, and lead from there."*

## CHAPTER IV LEADERSHIP

**L**eadership on any team is critical to success. All of you have been on teams that have had very good leadership, and I am sure you have been on some teams without it. Often, leadership is awarded by being elected captain by your teammates or selected by the coaching staff. However, not all leaders are also captains, and just because you are not a captain doesn't mean you cannot lead. Leadership isn't defined by a position, necessarily. It's indicative of the person more than the position, and it can take many forms. People lead in a variety of ways, and it's important to remember that leadership means different things for different people. I want to challenge you to embrace leadership as a valuable skill that will serve you throughout your lifetime in many environments outside of soccer. We must strive to develop more leaders and people with leadership qualities.

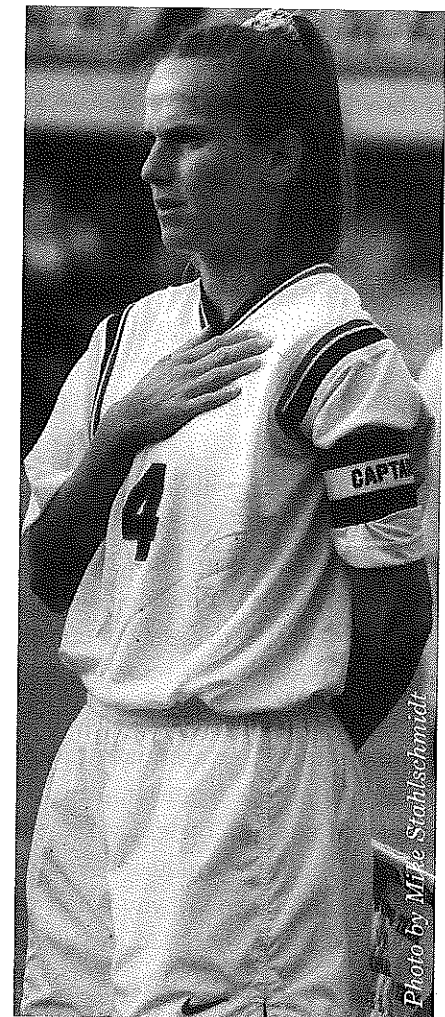
There are many ways to lead. But there are some basic tenets that are important in many positions of leadership, as well as moments of leadership. The examples we will share here illustrate some consistent messages about effective leadership.

### LEAD FROM YOUR PLACE OF STRENGTH

Be who you are. Knowing yourself gives you a good starting point. In turn, knowing your strengths as a person gives you information from which to lead. Lead from this place of confidence.

"First and foremost you have to be yourself," says Kristine Lilly, considered a leader by all the national team players. "Come out and show people who you are. And you should do little things for your teammates. For example, if they left their shoes some place, pick them up and bring them to that person. Don't leave them and say 'Oh, by the way your shoes are out there.'"

*Carla Overbeck, long-time captain of the national team, is a tremendous leader, both vocally and by example.*



**"The leader has to be unflappable. No matter what is going on around you, you have to be cooler than cool."**

— EUGENE KRANZ,

SUCCESSFULLY RETURNED  
APOLLO 13 AFTER CRISIS IN SPACE

One of the best leaders I have ever had the fortune of coaching was April Heinrichs, who captained the 1991 World Championship squad. April led in a variety of ways. First, she led through her incredible command on the field. Everyone tried to keep pace with her standards and mentality. That's the definition of leading by example. "April had the mentality that made you want to beat her all the time," says Kristine Lilly.

April had a reputation that came from how she embraced her training. This consistent standard earned her credibility and respect from her teammates. She didn't ask one thing and do another. She led from her

place of strength — her psychological dimension. Her leadership impacted the future leadership we would receive from Carla Overbeck, April's successor in the captain's role. Carla has become an invaluable leader for our program, upholding the high standard and expectations for our team.

#### LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Leaders need to recognize the moments in which their leadership is needed. Although this is an art in and of itself, much of the groundwork for a leader's effectiveness is established well in advance of any critical moment with which they are faced. A leader may have the ability to recognize when they need their team or staff to respond to their leadership. However, if they haven't developed necessary relationships with critical members of their team well in advance of needing their support, it's often too late.

April had set a standard for our program. This was established through the way she played, conducted herself and in her relationships with the starters, as well as the reserves. This was very important for us in establishing a tone in training and a mentality in our games, but also, when we were vulnerable. In the 1991 Women's World Cup, she helped us in the final match despite a disappointing knee injury that left her unable to physically impact the games, as she had for us all along. The process of gaining this trust and her ability to impact during halftime of the final was grounded long before.

"April evolved as a leader," says Shannon Higgins Cirovski, also a 1991 World Champion. "She didn't worry about how she was playing as much as how the team was playing. And she learned how to be outside of herself as a leader. She was in a lot of pain in those last games, basically heating up her knee so she could play. Without the injury, she could have torn it up, absolutely torn it up. She wasn't able to do what she could do, or wanted to do, for her team. But she was able to come out of herself and figure out what she needed to do for the team, perhaps just be there for us. She found a way to do what was going to help us win.

"I recall in '91 playing in the final against Norway," continues Shannon. "It was not a pretty game. We were just running. We couldn't get a hold of the ball. We couldn't string more than two passes together, and I remember April getting us all together during a stoppage of play and saying, 'Listen, we're good. Think about it. We're good!' I remember going back and saying 'Yeah, we are good. We aren't showing it right now, but we're good.' You can't let your lack of confidence kill you when you have been playing for eighty minutes and you haven't put two passes together. You can either look at what is going on and look into yourself, or you can emerge. April was telling us to emerge."

Leaders are able to lead because of their relationships with their players. They have a pulse on the team. This doesn't mean they are best friends with everyone. It means they know everyone and they understand what will be effective in working with them. Our leaders give the coaches invaluable input on the team's morale, energy, enthusiasm, burnout and motivation. This information is critical for us to factor into our own perceptions. It helps us with what we may want to do in practices, which players need feedback, and the timing of our hard days and days off. Great leaders develop trust among the people they work with, and this foundation must be put into place well in advance.

#### CREATING A COHESIVE UNIT

The dynamics of any team or organization are instrumental in the viability of that team. Understanding the personalities on your team is essential to knowing how to listen, to provide alternative views, and to lead them to action. This, too, is an important foundation. You can't wait until you need your teammates to respond to you. First, you need to know what makes them tick and how they are going to respond to a situation. All of your interactions then become important early steps. Cohesiveness is worked at and must be in place. Knowing your personnel allows you to better lead the unit. Then, the integration of these personalities must become central to a leader's mission.

Carla Overbeck, Julie Foudy and Kristine Lilly are tremendous leaders. They take the time to welcome new players and make them feel part of the team. "You just have to get to know every player," says Julie. "A sure thing to break down a team is little cliques. It's easy to have younger players in one group and the older players in another group. On any trip we go on, the veterans make a point of just sitting with the younger players and talking with them. It would be so easy to stay in our comfort zone and hang out with the people we've been playing with for ten years. So we sit with the younger players at lunch and talk with them. It's easy after you've broken the ice."

Adds Kristine, "We spend so much time together, we want to know about everyone's lives and enjoy them and have fun with them. And to me, that translates on to the field. If you don't care about your teammates, you aren't going to work as hard. I don't care what anybody says, you might work hard, but you are going to work harder if you care about the people you are playing with. If players get so caught up in themselves, it affects team chemistry."

Tracey Bates Leone, 1991 World Champion, points out that each player is unique and thus requires a different

**"The most important thing is to listen to your peers and understand what is being asked of you. You have to understand that someone has identified you as a leader, and it's your responsibility to accept that and act on it."**

— APRIL HEINRICHS

#### EVALUATING YOUR LEADERSHIP DECISIONS

It is important to re-examine decisions you've made, or actions you've taken, individually as a leader or as a team. This information will reinforce effective leadership or give you new information which will impact future actions. Michael Useem wrote the book, *The Leadership Moment*, an invaluable resource for anyone. (1) He provides four basic questions to help you look at your leadership.

1. What we (I) did right?
2. What was our (my) biggest mistake?
3. What we (I) wish we had done ahead of time?
4. What is the most enduring lesson for my actions now?

"A game is when you are motivated to play. It's the fun part. Practice shows your true leadership."

— KRISTINE LILLY

#### LEADING BY EXAMPLE

What you do should speak louder than any words you could use. There are many different ways to lead through example. "One of them is work," says Tracey Bates Leone. "Work gains a lot of respect." Your work ethic makes a statement to your teammates.

At the University of Virginia, I can remember a few of my players in our program who became incredible leaders through their work ethic. Amanda Cromwell and Gayle Smith always set our practice tone. Players followed their lead, and our whole practice intensity went up. We were able to build a program from scratch in only a few short years to be a national championship contender because of some of the great leadership Amanda gave us. She helped us establish a tradition of excellence.

On my 1997 youth national team, Cindy Parlow and Tiff Roberts really emerged as field leaders. It's contagious to be on a team with players like these because other players can't help but try to step up their game as well. All of the greatest leaders in our sport have one tangible quality in common — work ethic. Never underestimate the impact working hard can have on others. Be the example — let it start with you.

#### TIRELESS COMMITMENT TO WORK HARD

On the national team, Kristine Lilly is touted by her teammates as someone who leads through her work ethic. She never stops working, especially for her teammates. Christie Pearce, new to the national team in 1996, noted, "Kristine gives 120 percent in everything she does. There is never a moment in practice when she gives up." Kristine certainly has the respect and admiration of her coaches, teammates and opponents. "She's not the most vocal player on the team, but she is very vocal on the field through the way she plays," says Julie Foudy. "If I had to choose to rest all the responsibility on one player's shoulders, Lilly would be one of the first I'd choose. She's always there in the clutch and she's so consistent."

Tiffeny Milbrett, adds, "Lil quite possibly has a huge case to argue that she is the most underrated player in the world. But she doesn't worry about that stuff ... and she has a right to. To be honest, I don't think she worries about anything outside of trying to do her best day-in and day-out. She is that consistent. We all go through days where we're trying 100 percent, but we're just awful. Whether or not Lil is the greatest or worst player on that field that day, you know she gave it her all. She just wants to play soccer. That means she loves what she does and she tries to do what she can everyday. That is why I admire her."

Leading by example goes well beyond just what happens in a match. "That's the easy part," says Kristine. "A game is when you are motivated to play. It's the fun part. Practice shows your true leadership."

"If I had to choose to rest all the responsibility on one player's shoulders, Lilly would be one of the first I'd choose. She's always there in the clutch and she's so consistent."

— JULIE FOUDY

#### THE EXAMPLE

"Leading by example is mainly about taking responsibility," says Kristine Lilly. "Little do you know, but people are watching how you train and what you are doing. In any kind of practice, if certain players that you look up to are doing things half-way and not fully, it affects the rest of the team. You have to take responsibility so everyone is giving everything they have. When you see another person stepping it up and pushing hard, you think, 'Okay, now I've got to step up.' The good thing about leading by example is that if you have the mentality and nature to always give 100 percent, you aren't doing anything differently than you would normally do. So you are an example no matter what. Players that naturally give 100 percent, don't really have any extra responsibility other than the fact that people are watching them."

Leaders take charge of the direction and success of their teams, and the levels of responsibility are numerous. Potentially, every action is evaluated. You must be sensitive to how you act in all situations. The most prevalent place, as Kristine alluded to, is during practice. If you want to be a leader for your team, you must train in a way that influences your teammates. If just a few players slack off in practice, the whole practice can be affected. On the other hand, when a few key personalities take responsibility for the tone of practice, the outcome is very different. For us, players like Lilly, Overbeck, Fawcett and Akers are always holding themselves accountable for the tone and standard of our training.

#### TRANSLATING LEADERSHIP OFF THE FIELD

Being a leader is often not easy. You can be resented by teammates who are not willing to live up to the standards you are setting. Some team members simply might dislike you. But it's not about being popular. Leading is about respect and effect. "I learned quickly that if I was going to do anything, I was going to do it right," says April. "That's the way I have always been. With that attitude, I was not going to lower my standards just to be accepted, liked or socially ingratiated. I would not call myself a perfectionist. I would never confuse those two things. I believe you have to constantly raise the bar on yourself."

People who are seen as leaders by example are often some of the more quiet players on the team. A perfect example of this type of leadership is Joy Fawcett. Joy comes to national team camps with two young children and all the paraphernalia that goes along with them. Julie Foudy describes the scene. "We see Joy walking through the airport with Carli in her arms, a diaper bag on one shoulder, Katey holding her hand, a stroller balanced on her head, and we just marvel at her. We call her Super Woman."



Joy and Katey

*What you do speaks so loudly,  
no one can hear what you say.*

Joy has the utmost respect from every player on the team because she is one of the most consistent players in the world on the field and off. "Joy does everything necessary to make sure she is prepared," says Brandi Chastain. "She doesn't have to be outspoken about the things she does. The neat thing about Joy is when we get into team activities, things that are not involved with soccer, people look to Joy. Before the Olympics, Colleen would give us a team-building exercise and everyone would say, 'Joy, how do we do it?' That's her time to give her input, and she feels very comfortable doing it. She is very calm. She doesn't panic. It will get done. And you can see it on the field."

When Christie Pearce joined the national team, she found a great way to learn was to watch Joy. "She is a great leader," Christie says. "She isn't necessarily a vocal leader, but she does it on the field in so many different ways, just her presence and her consistent play. She doesn't have to say much, but you know she's there, and it gives you confidence knowing she's there. As a newcomer, it was great to have her there. She knows what she is doing, and I know she is there to help out."

In addition, Carla Overbeck, the captain of the women's national team is unfailing in her leadership. She leads by example every day, on and off the field. No comment, action or statement goes without a desired outcome. She is a consummate professional. Her work ethic is constant. She has everyone's respect. Yet, she leads in different ways from Joy, Julie and Kristine. For example, Julie, our co-captain, leads through her work ethic and her gregarious personality. Finding your own leadership style is important.

#### VERBAL LEADERSHIP: CHOOSING THE MOMENTS

I recall when we went to Australia in the spring of 1997, there was a silence on the field. Something was missing. Then, it struck me. It was Carla's voice. Carla, who was not on the trip with us because she was pregnant, had always provided a verbal leadership and presence for this team. Her voice was noticeably absent. Verbal leadership, however, is not merely running chatter or being a cheerleader for your team. It's calculated instruction, encouragement, or whatever the team may need at precisely the right time and in the right tone of voice. The tone and timing of verbal leadership is an art. Carla is masterful at it.

"Vocal leadership, in itself, is so powerful," says Julie Foudy. "The prime example is Carla. She's so positive, and that helps us out a lot. Remaining positive is the hardest part. It's easy to take on a negative tone. When I get frustrated, my tone changes and sometimes instead of encouraging people, it can break down. I am conscious of it, and I work at it because I am also one of the more vocal players. It's my responsibility."

Carla has evolved into an incredible leader. There are many elements to her leadership style. Her work ethic and standard for excellence is vital to our day-to-day rhythm. Her on-field leadership is found both in large obvious moments and small, yet instrumental moments. She has worked hard on perfecting vocal leadership. "You just have to keep talking to them and encouraging them," she explains. "I think you really have to know each player and how to get to them, how to get them fired up. During the course of a game, if someone does something well, you encourage them by letting them know what they just did is what is going to help the team win. The other side of that, and I think this is where some people in leadership roles run into problems, is that they are too negative too often. It's okay to get after someone for doing something wrong, but when they do something right, you have to let them know, too."

"People know your personality off the field as well," adds Carla. "Maybe if you say something to them that isn't nice, they know you are just trying to make them better. They can take

the bad things easier if there is something good in there, too. I'm a pretty compassionate person, and when people make mistakes, it's not my job as a player to jump all over them. That's what the coach is there to do. Obviously, the players know when they've made a mistake. They know they messed up, and they don't want someone jumping all over them. So I'm the first to say, 'It's okay. Do better next time.' Everyone is human, and certainly everyone is going to make mistakes. I'm much harder on myself than I am on anyone else."

Like all great players, leaders must be consistent, predictable and always hold themselves accountable for outcomes, their own and those of their team or organization. For example, Joy has standards for her performance that are nearly unreachable. She's very critical of her play, and her teammates often look at her as if she's lost her mind when she says she's had a bad game. "On the field she is so solid," says Lorrie Fair. "The games she thinks she played badly ... it's like, 'I didn't see that.' She's a great player. I think she is one of the greatest players in the world. It has been an honor for me to play with her. She is such a good person as well as a great player."

#### LEADING AS A CAPTAIN

Captains have an even more specialized leadership role. As a captain, you have either been elected by your teammates or appointed by your coaching staff to represent your team. It's an incredible honor and vital to your team. Yet it's important to understand that the title or the appointment in and of itself is not the critical thing. It's what you can do from this position that will make — or not make — you an effective leader. Like aspects of training, your leadership must constantly be evaluated, worked on and improved.

My '97 youth national team was captained, by an almost unanimous vote of her teammates, by Michelle French. She was a talented, starting member of our team, and we needed to have her on the field to win. But what she gave us went well beyond her ability to play soccer. She earned everyone's respect because she was the same person to everyone on the team. She was honest and conducted herself in a manner that everyone admired. They all wanted her to represent us and our country. For me as the coach, she was also invaluable. I could always go to her to find out how the team was holding up physically and psychologically. She was connected to everyone and treated everyone equally. She served as liaison between me and the team.

"You have to be able to recognize what's going on with the team and convey that to the coaches and the players," says Michelle. "Paying attention to the small details and reading the pulse of the team is helpful. I enjoy people and that helped me tremendously. That's why it was easy for me to get along with everyone."

Another member of my team that summer, and a current member of the women's national team, Lorrie Fair, puts it well when she describes what qualities our captains embody. "Captains take the weight of the team on their shoulders," Lorrie says. "A lot of players have either one quality or the other, leaders either on or off the field, but only a few have both. And those are the players who really strike you as great people. They are great role models and the kind of people you want your children to look up to." Lorrie was referring to the national team's current captains, Carla Overbeck and Julie Foudy.

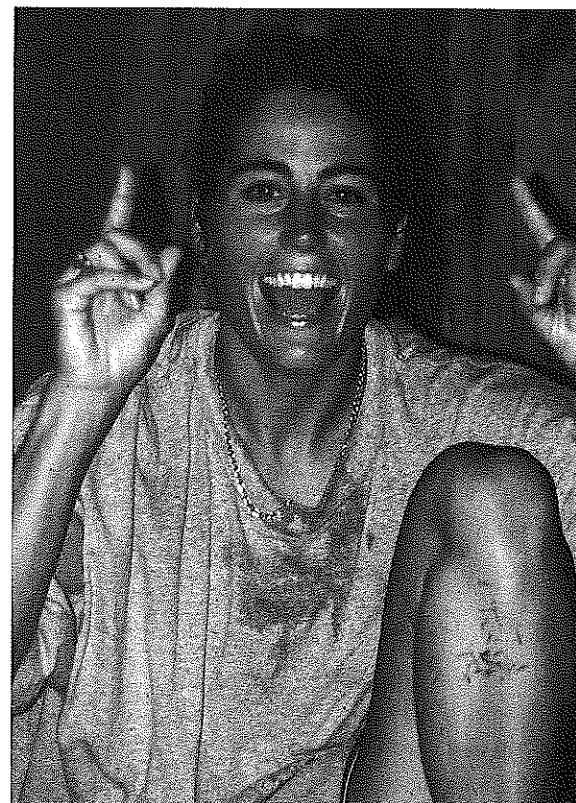
Leaders, our captains Carla and Julie, appreciate the need to get the most out of each player. Part of that means inspiring others to embody leadership qualities themselves. This does not mean that we have eleven leaders at all times but that each person's contributions

are maximized, and that when put in places of leadership, they conduct themselves with effective leadership qualities. Like mentality, leadership is exemplified in the smallest of moments, as well as at game-breaking times. Leaders need to recognize times when their leadership is needed. Carla, Julie, Kristine, Joy and other veteran players are always the first to help unload the bus. They are the ones jogging on and off the field for a water break, they are on time and the tone of practice is always set by them. Through their behavior, they are passing on crucial information to our next generation of leaders, essential for excellence. Leaders develop leaders. If we need the tone of practice to change, we can always go to our leadership — not just our captains — and say we need more. And it happens. They carry a responsibility to get the most out of their teammates. Excellence requires constant striving. It's not an end point but a process much like all of the self-coaching tenets addressed throughout this book. Leaders help keep their team focused on this objective.

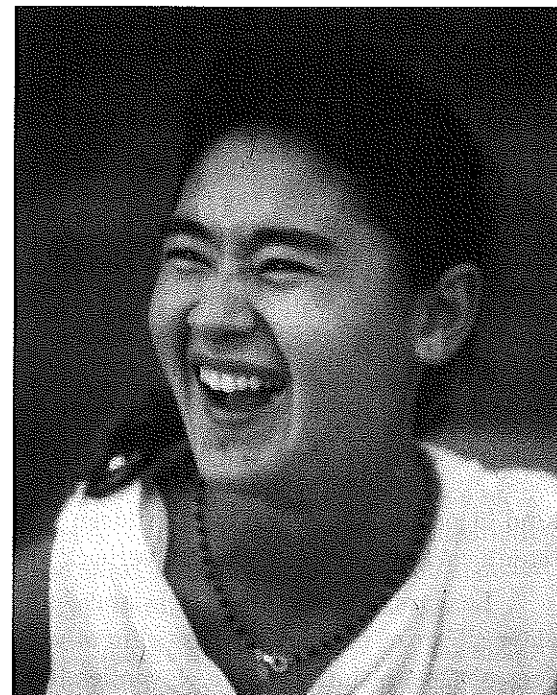
Carla is the consummate leader. She embodies the critical elements and fundamentals of a great leader. She is the example on the field. She sets the standard for our performance and high expectations for our team beginning with what she demands from herself. She has the necessary balance of encouragement, command, and hardness. She takes responsibility for her own success as well as the team's success. Everyday, she commits to excellence.

#### TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ATTITUDE

In addition to taking responsibility for how you train, you can lead by taking responsibility for your attitude. The way you handle difficult situations, relate to your teammates and deal with staff and other people is very important. Do you respect and uphold team rules? Are you on time? Are you courteous? It gets down to the core of who you are as a person and how you conduct yourself in all situations.



*Julie Foudy (L) and Tiffany Roberts are two of the more dynamic personalities on the national team. They make you smile!*



As Tracey Leone says, "A lot of it is about having qualities that other people would like to have themselves." Let's face it, things are not always going to go smoothly. The bus is late. The food is bad. You're tired from travel. The referee is horrible. Your coach gets on you. You had a bad day in school. Your teammate is having a nightmare. You are having a nightmare.

Your attitude can influence your team either positively or negatively. You choose. If you really want to lead, you need to appreciate that people are looking to you. They will respond based on signals you give them. Remember, good leaders are followed, so don't lead your teammates off a cliff. "To lead in the right way you have to be positive," says Tracey. "And that doesn't mean just with your coach, but with everyone involved — teammates, staff, parents of teammates. You want to always be respectful and courteous. It's almost like there is a microscope on you all the time."

#### LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

1. Listening is an important part of a leader's ability to understand, make decisions and act.
2. Utilize communication ability, verbal skills and body language.
3. Seek opportunity to learn from successful people.
4. Know your strengths. Lead from that place of strength.
5. Know your teammates.
6. Provide alternative ways of looking at a situation or information.
7. Be consistent.
8. Facilitate the creation of a team strategy or vision.
9. Provide alternatives, solutions and direction.
10. Take responsibility.
11. Believe in themselves.
12. Provide an example to others.
13. Make a difference.
14. Strive for excellence.

#### WAYS TO LEAD

<b>BY EXAMPLE</b>	How you train, prepare and conduct yourself
<b>VOCAL</b>	Encouragement and instruction
<b>ATTITUDE</b>	Choosing a positive response to situations
<b>FIND SOLUTIONS</b>	Providing solutions; being adaptable
<b>ON AND OFF THE FIELD</b>	How you conduct yourself; being professional; energetic
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Taking responsibility in training, matches and off the field
<b>FLEXIBLE APPROACH</b>	Recognizing different people's needs and what they respond to
<b>RESPECTFUL</b>	How you treat your teammates, coaches and others
<b>SERVE AS A LIAISON</b>	Between players, as well as between players and coaches
<b>HIGH EXPECTATIONS</b>	The vision and expectations begin with you