**Game-Changing Leadership: Building Teams That Win**

**Brian:** Welcome to the One advantage Podcast, exploring the intersections of pure power, culture, and agility. Your host, Jason Richmond, Mike Richardson, and Leo Bottary, co-founders of the One Advantage Community of Practice and Advantage peer Groups. For more information, please visit us at Ideal Outcomes Inc.com

**Mike:** Hey everybody. Welcome back to another episode of The One Advantage Podcast. We're gonna have an interesting one today, just ahead of the Super Bowl. Of course, game changing leadership building teams that win. And we'll get to that in a moment. Uh, it's myself and Jason today. I have no idea where Leo is.

He's probably all over the world somewhere. Jason, as we always do, let's check in first and foremost to find that where have you been and what have you been up to?

**Jason:** Well, I know Leo was in Austin yesterday, myself. I had an opportunity to scoot down to the Virgin Islands for this last week and get some work done, in my office down here in some beautiful. 85, 88-degree weather. I wanted to get out of the tundra of the Midwest, if you will. So I'm still here, but I'll be back in California on the 1st of February. But I've had just kind of heads down office week this last week, Mike, which is, absolutely needed once in a while.

**Mike:** Yes, indeed. Yes it is. And yeah, I can tell actually from the video feed here backdrop.

And, I gotta get over there one of these days, Jason? Yes. And check it out. So, I've been, by and large I've been around here, but been having Zoom calls with, people all over the world as usual. Doing some great peer group work and consulting work. So yeah, I've been having a blast.

Everybody. Of course, we've got the big game coming up, game changing leadership building teams that win score big. Core principles and strategies that define Super Bowl winning teams. Learn from the success stories of top performing teams and discover how to promote a culture. Of excellence, develop strong leadership and create an environment where every team member contributes to achieving outstanding results.

Now just be careful with this one, Jason. Just be careful. I don't know a lot about the Super Bowl. I don't know a lot about American football. Please don't embarrass me. If you want to talk English, premier League Foot Soccer, if you want to talk rugby, if you want to talk cricket, I am your guy.

**Jason:** One of my key members of my team is Manchester City all the way.

Oh, I mean, she doesn't miss a game. She lives up in the desert. I know enough about that to be dangerous, where your expertise comes in. But, you know, really it doesn't matter if it's American football, if it’s Super Bowl, if it's baseball and it's the World Series, which by the way, I have no idea why baseball calls it the World series.

**Mike:** No. Well, wait, that's another, that's a whole different podcast right there.

**Jason:** Our Premier League right Championship teams, operate culturally at a different level. And, and you know, I'm a big Kansas City Chiefs fan, go Chiefs. They're playing on Sunday. For their opportunity to get to another Super Bowl.

And I am really, really good friends and colleagues with a couple ex coaches, that years ago used to be on that Kansas City team. And that's when I was living in Kansas City, of course, and stayed in touch with them. And we have so many conversations around team performance when we get together a couple times a year that we do.

And, and his name happens to be Jason too. And he really narrowed it down. One night we were together and he said, Jason, I've worked in professional sports my entire career. I've been in so many different teams that make your head spin and he says one of one, just about a pure observation. One of the big differences I see in team performance is the level of vulnerability in the ranks and in the locker room.

**Mike:** Oh, yeah. Love that. Love that. Love that.

**Jason:** So what does it mean when these analysts and everyone talking about X's and O's and plays and, and all that type of stuff? You know, I would love to be watching the pre-game show and have some analysts talk about vulnerability within the locker room.

Right?

**Mike:** Yeah. I love that. And other words that go with it. Humility. Always looking to learn and grow from your mistakes and having the humility and vulnerability to do that. I think you've just got us, you've got us to the pretty close to the bottom line right out of the gate there, in that, you know, when I think about this, everybody, you know, whoever's in the final of the Super Bowl, whoever's in the, the final of, you know, the soccer championships, the World Cup.

The European Cup, the Champions League, whatever it is on paper, by and large, right on paper, the two teams, to some degree are evenly matched, otherwise they wouldn't be in the final, right? They both made it to the final. So on paper that evenly matched. So what is it that makes the difference on the field, you know, in the game?

And in the locker room and on the practice field, what is it that makes the difference and stacks the odds in the favor of one team winning and against the other? It’s culture, it’s leadership, it’s communication, it's coaching, of course, and inside all of that, it's vulnerability, it's humility, and just an insatiable desire to learn and grow and get better. Is it not Jason?

**Jason:** Well, it, it is, it's funny. I was working with a client earlier this week, right? And this consulting company is nationwide. They're spread out. It's a remote workforce. They do have some brick and mortar buildings. They have people that work from home.

They have people that work in clients' sites, right? So they're truly a remote organization. However, they all work in clusters or, or in disciplines. Right. And we talked a lot about the presence you can have in your neighborhood, right? The power, the influence, the communication, the comfort level you have in your neighborhood.

Well, if you look at any sports team or you look at any organization, it is built up of several neighborhoods. Where people drop the ball is to be able to take that neighborhood influence and expand that now into our community.

**Mike:** Right, right,

**Jason:** Right. And that community influence and paving the way within our community, it's hard to get out of our neighborhood.

And that's no different than sports teams. You've got an offense, you got a defense, you got special teams. Right. You've got neighborhoods within a sports team.

**Mike:** Yeah.

**Jason:** Right.

And, I wrap all this up thinking about professional sports. By the way, everyone's not a sports fan and that's okay.

But the analogies, the analogies really relate to business and what we do for a living. But I relate that neighborhood community, that expansion into the community from your neighborhood. I relate that to team chemistry.

**Mike:** And, and you mean like functional neighborhoods in a business?

**Jason:** Yeah.

**Mike:** You've got this functional vertical and that functional vertical.

How do you get out of your neighborhood, your function, and spread that influence, that impact, that presence horizontally across the other functions to operate more as a community. I love that analogy.

**Jason:** Absolutely. And, really, I like to build an umbrella that, across that umbrella says, team chemistry.

**Mike:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And you know, everybody, what I love about using the metaphor of professional sports, whether it is American football or soccer or rugby or cricket or anything else, frankly, you know, golf, you know, whatever it is, is that in particular with soccer and, and football, most people will tell you that games like that come down to inches and seconds.

Right? Yeah. Was the foot, you know, that was planted? Was it one inch to right side of the line, or one inch the wrong side of the line? Did the ball go in in soccer? We see plenty of times now with goal line technology. Did the ball go over the line, you know, fractionally, or did it not fractionally?

Was the pass, you know, timed beautifully? If it had been half a second later or half a second earlier, it wouldn't have worked. But it was just beautiful. These games come down to inches and seconds. And do you have the cultural. capacity, the cultural capability that you have built up in the locker room through that vulnerable, transparent, debriefing and learning and growing.

And that just the hours and hours and hours that you've put in on the practice ground to play the game at that level of inches and seconds being on your side. Rather than, versus the other side. I love the metaphor of these professional sports games. 'cause it really, it really sheds a light on that sort of cultural foundation that you've gotta have Jason.

**Jason:** Yeah. You know, I've got another one that really sticks out to me. I played college sports myself, Mike. I played American football in college and, worked my way through that and everything. And I'm not saying we were a championship team or anything, but, but I've been there, right?

I've had those shoes on at a college level. And, and I've always felt that some of the big differences in championship teams is this. Uniform work ethic. Now, I talk with organizations every day, individual contributors, leaders in organizations that will say, how dare you challenge my work ethic?

I work 50, 60, sometimes 70 hours a week. Right? I don't believe personally that the number of hours you put in your job equates to your actual work ethic. Right. I can put 70 hours a week in too, but take a look at what I actually did and accomplish that week. Right? Might be different. I think work ethic is your dedication to always improve.

I think work ethic is continuous learning. I think it's a strong commitment to clients’ innovation, new ideas, right? Those types of things, right? Putting in every extra effort, not hours, but effort in the hours that you do have. To raise the bar to win one more game, to go to that next level. I think work ethic is very misunderstood and it's often related to how many hours I work.

**Mike:** Yeah, it's an old idea that I think I first heard from Dale Carnegie was everybody says practice makes perfect. Actually no, perfect practice makes perfect. So how perfect are we practicing everybody? It's not about the quantity of hours. It's about the quality of hours, and the combination of both of those things that add up to work ethic.

You know, I just got off a call earlier this morning with a new client where we had a little introductory call with the team and the CEO was saying to the team, in introducing us, “Hey, we are doing really well. We are growing really quickly. Everything is ticking over very nicely. We don't have any burning issues, problems, challenges, and I want to bring in some help.”

And so we, we introduced ourselves, myself, and one of my colleagues that you've met, Mark Redgrave. And I said, we work with organizations that do have challenges, problems, and, and issues.

We do, of course, but the organizations we love to work with, most of all are those that you could say are the best. Getting better. And they are just relentlessly wanting to raise our game again. Let's kick the tires some more and figure out how the best can get better.

And I think that is just relentless. And, and the other thing that comes up for me, Jason, this may not mean much to too many people out there, although it is one of the most famous, English soccer clubs on the planet, Manchester United famously. You know, up until about whatever it was 10 years ago when Sir Alex Ferguson, the previous coach, retired, it may be more than 10 years now, they were one of the very best on the planet, won everything.

Yep. And then Sir Alex Ferguson retired and for the last 10 years, Manchester United has gone through a procession of managers. Yeah, and are just now an average team. There's nothing special about them. They haven't won hardly anything worth winning, frankly, in those 10 years and not without spending loads and loads and loads of money on the best players on the planet.

If you remember Christiano Ronaldo came back to Manchester United and it didn't make any difference. And you know, we know why. Yeah. It's because of what's happening in the locker room and what's happening on the practice field. The culture, the communication, the transparency, the vulnerability, the humility that the coach catalyzes just isn't quite there.

Yep. To the same degree. What would you say, Jason?

**Jason:** Well, I would agree one hundred percent and just like in business today, we are always trying to attract and retain the absolute best talent, right? The highest skill, the best talent, that we can within our organization. That alone isn't going to differentiate us or put us heads and shoulders above our competition.

It's how that talent works together, right? It's that coach, it's that leader. It's that direction. It's that spirit and that drive within sports teams that meshes this talent. Right. And again, I think it just goes back to, we deal with this all the time, we deal with a lot of first time leaders or new managers that have been promoted because of their technical talent.

Within an organization that doesn't make them a good leader, that doesn't make them a good manager. They have to practice. They have to come to practice. They have to work on their craft as a leader every day to make that transition. And maximize that core talent to now build a team to build performance of an organization.

And that's a big blind spot for a lot of new leaders is that they've gotten so far in their career based on their own individual talent, but now they've got to shift that and use that talent to develop other people versus continually individually succeeding.

**Mike:** Yeah, you used the word practice in there and I think that is one of the challenges. When you look at professional sports teams getting ready for the Super Bowl or English Premier League, whatever it is, they spend a lot of time on the practice field, run the play again.

Run the play again. Run the play again. You know, if they're trying to master a new dynamic to get it just right from an inches and seconds point of view. If they're trying to do a trick play, or a fake or whatever it is, you know, run it again, run it again, run it again. Of course, in business, we hardly practice at all.

Yeah. We don't have a practice field. Of course if we're about to do a presentation to the board, we might do a dry run, et cetera, et cetera. But in our everyday business, running meetings, meeting with clients, you know, doing proposals, all that kind of stuff, if we're not careful, we don't practice at all.

Yeah. We're practicing on the job in real time. Get it right first time, which is okay. As long as we have a lot of great coaching and mentoring going on to, to assure that we're going to do okay. Now we're okay with failure. We're okay with small mistakes. Yeah. But we can't afford big mistakes. Right. So I think that's one of the challenges in that, Jason, that in business we actually don't have a practice field very much.

What would you say?

**Jason:** I would say practice. You know, you've heard athletes say, practice what? You know, we play every week. What am I practicing for? Well, practice, you have to go back to your point. Practice makes permanent, right? I can go on a driving range. And I can slice this ball 200 yards off to the right 200 times.

Guess what I've done? I have now made that a permanent slice, right? And, trust me, I've done it. So it's, you know, so I think the, the other key component of high-performing championship teams year after year, and this is right up your alley, some would call it adaptability. I'd go as far as saying agility.

You know, there's not a championship team out there that does not overcome in a resilient way, adversity, injuries. Right. Key players go down gaps. Right. And they not only do that, but they prepare for their opponent. Every week, every other day. They're constantly preparing for what's up front.

I think that's a gap, and that's something that needs to be addressed in business today. How much time and effort are we putting in our preparation for our next challenge?

Yeah.

**Mike:** To have that deeply ingrained mental agility, everybody. Emotional agility, resiliency, composure.

And it's interesting, Jason, that you brought up golf. cause last weekend, although this week, this, as we record this weekend, presently is the Farmer's Open in San Diego at Tory Pines. Last weekend was the American Express Invitational, PGA tournament in Palm Desert, LA Quinta in Palm Desert.

And we always go to that every year. And we went on the Saturday, the penultimate day. Yep. With the final day on the Sunday. And that's the one that was won for the first time in 30 something years by a 20-year-old sophomore at college called Nick Dunlap, who's an amateur. And he won the whole thing.

And we had seen him on the Saturday, face-to-face as it were, 'cause we were there for the day. And then we watched on the Sunday as he played the final round. And of course, you know, everybody was kind of half expecting, as we've seen a number of times before, with these things that somewhere coming down the home stretch.

And the pressure’s mounting, that he would crater and just fade away. And there were a few fleeting moments where that looked like it might happen. But somehow a 20-year-old amateur managed to dig deep and managed to hang in there and he managed to get to the 18th hole and sink the final putt.

With one shot to spare and win the whole thing. That's called mental agility. Yep. Emotional agility. And it's called resiliency right there. And that doesn't come cheaply, does it? That comes through hard work, grind. Experience. Failure. Failure and failure. Picking yourself up. Dusting yourself off.

**Jason:** Well there's a lot of lessons learned in in our passions and our hobbies, sports being one of those things, and those lessons learned from that team performance and how that relates into our leadership and our business careers and our companies.

It'll open your eyes. Watch a sports event through a different lens, watch it from a different perspective and challenge yourself to take lessons learned out of those sporting engagements where you're a spectator, and really try to bring that into your work environment and you might see a difference.

**Mike:** Yeah. And I think everybody, as you watch the Super Bow which, happens a couple of days after this recording comes out, I would say try to look, try to watch it through a new lens. Look for the inches and seconds and which team tended to be on the right side of inches and seconds, which team tended to be on the wrong side of inches and seconds.

It's all these games are always won and lost marginally, aren't they? I mean, yes, the scoreboard may suggest it was a whitewash. They steamrolled the other team. But no, it still came down to inches and seconds and was one team consistently on the right side?

And was one team consistently on the wrong side? And you might imagine that that it comes down to very tangible, mechanical, tactical things. But I think what we're saying to you all, everybody is actually, no. What it comes down to is a very intangible thing that happens in the locker room and on the practice field called culture, called teamwork, called communication leadership.

Vulnerability and humility. Yep. And final thoughts, Jason, just to finish that off,

**Jason:** Focus on three primary things, start the day off. Tomorrow we're focusing on team chemistry, work ethic, and adaptability /agility.

**Mike:** Yeah. And then in particular, the agility piece, everybody. And having what I call agile composure.

Mm-Hmm. In the face of craziness, I'm more familiar with the soccer analogy. If you're going in at halftime and you're a goal down, or two goals down, or three goals down, you know, now the coach really has some work to do, don't they?

Because if you're not careful, the emotional psychology of the locker room is spiraling downwards, and the team is kind of half giving up. Yeah, they'll go out for the second half and they'll go through the motions, but their heart isn't really in it. They've almost given up the game already as lost.

And yet how many times do we see people bounce back? Mm-Hmm. And win the second half to win the whole thing. And, that's about coaching, leadership, communication, vulnerability, and humility. So enjoy the game, everybody. We'll know the score next time and we can perhaps talk some more.

There you have it everybody. Another episode of The One Advantage podcast. Come back and join us again next time.

**Brian:** Thanks for listening to the One Advantage podcast. If you liked this episode, please consider helping us by rating us wherever you listen, spreading the word, having us as a guest on your podcast or webinar, and mentioning us in social media. Find us at the One Advantage Podcast where you can get more information about us. And this episode. Thanks again for listening and we look forward to more great episodes to come.