Positive Coaching Script for Redefining "Winner" (ELM Tree of Mastery)

Baseball is a great game. It's a lot of fun to play, and it's also a way that we learn important lessons that can help us later in life. I know that I learned a lot from playing competitive sports when I was your age.

I want to tell you about a goal I have for the team and for each of you individually this season. I want each of us to "Act like a winner to be a winner."

There are two kinds of winners. What is one kind of winner? What does "winner" mean to you? (Answer likely to be something like "The one who has the most points at the end of the game.")

One kind of winner is the team that has the most points on the scoreboard at the end of the game. And we want to be that kind of winner. We want to work as hard as we can to win as many games as we can.

There is another kind of winner though that is just as important. That is a winner in life.

We want to learn from this season how to be a winner in everything we do, not just baseball.

To be a winner we need to start acting like a winner. And a winner is someone who is working for mastery of whatever activity he or she is doing. So in baseball we want to work toward mastery to be the best baseball player and team we can be. And we want to learn how to achieve mastery at anything we want to be good at.

To help understand the way that we achieve mastery, we use the example of a tree that we call the Tree of Mastery. If you climb the Tree of Mastery you will be successful.

We say that the Tree of Mastery is an ELM tree because there are three things you need to do to climb the ELM Tree of Mastery:

(1) **E is for Effort.** We want to give our best effort every time we come out on the field. I am more concerned that we try our hardest than I am if we win. We could win against a weak team without giving it our best effort, and that doesn't really mean anything.

On the other hand we could play a team that was stronger than we are and try our very hardest and lose. I would be proud of us in that case because we were acting like a winner by trying our hardest even though the other team ended up winning the game on the scoreboard.

So the first part of the ELM Tree is E for Effort.

(2) **L is for Learning.** We want to continue learning and improving every week in practice and every time we play a game. If we continue to learn, we will get better and that is more important than whether or not we are better than some other team.

We could be better than another team without learning and improving if that team is a weak team. And we could be weaker than another team but be learning a lot and getting better all the time. It's more important to me that we learn and improve than it is to beat a team that isn't very good. And it's more important that we learn and improve even if we lose to a team that is stronger than we are.

So the second part of the ELM Tree is L for Learning.

(3) **M is for how we respond to Mistakes.** Most people think it's bad to make a mistake. But mistakes are part of the learning process. You can't learn something as complicated as baseball if you are afraid to make a mistake. And people that are afraid to make a mistake often don't even try very hard.

I want you to know that it is okay to make a mistake on this team. We want to learn from our mistakes and not let them discourage us or keep us from working hard.

So, is it okay to make a mistake on this team? Yes, it is. And the third part of the ELM Tree is M for how we respond to a Mistake.

Acting like a winner involves three things. It means
- Giving your best effort every time
- Continuing to learn and improve, and
- Not letting mistakes (or fear of making a mistake) stop you.

If you do these three things, you are acting like a winner, and you will be a winner in life as well as baseball. Now let's have a great practice. Give it your best effort, learn as much as you can, and don't worry about making a mistake.

Oh, before we go, what kind of a tree is the Tree of Mastery?

What does each letter stand for?