

Dominant moments

We all watch sporting events in awe of players who take over the game, who do amazing things with the ball or playing defense, the ones who teammates look to in the clutch to come up with the big play.

Those great, dominant players are few and far between, and having one or two on a team doesn't guarantee success. The sports pages are filled with the names of players who put up gaudy statistics, but who play for average or below-average teams.

So while it's great to have dominant players – and while we'd love for each of you to develop those skills – the truth is that we don't need to have that kind of person on our team in order to succeed.

Instead, we need for all of our players to be capable of “dominant moments.”

A dominant moment is a fleeting thing -- a small bit, lasting for just seconds of a long game -- but each one is critically important for the success of the team.

If you can scoop the ball in traffic, protect it, stay calm and pass it to an open teammate, during those five or six seconds, the actions of every other player on the field depend upon you. If you put yourself in a position where you can intercept a pass – or where the opponent must change their play because you're playing proper defense and they can't bring the ball in your direction – you have tremendous influence on how the next minute or two of the game will unfold.

If you back up a shot so that the team retains possession of the ball, you have given your offense another chance to succeed. If a player is running unchecked towards our goal and you step in and force them to pass the ball, you have controlled the game without ever having possession of the ball. If you go to the right spot so that a teammate can pass to you when you are open or when they are in jeopardy of losing the ball, you have given your team the most opportunity it can have at that instant.

If you are unafraid to be aggressive when the opportunity presents itself, but know to be cautious or conservative when the situation calls for it, you will impact the flow of the game at its most critical times.

If you work hard during practice, pushing to get the most out of your coaches, teammates and yourself, you are dominating the moments that provide your best learning opportunities.

Dominant moments are all about doing the little things right, and allowing the big things to take care of themselves. They are about trusting your teammates and what you have learned in practice, and getting the most out of both. They are about being unafraid when the fickle bounce of a ball puts you in the center of the action, even if that is the last place you really want to be.

In lacrosse and in life, success is moving from one failure to the next without losing your enthusiasm. When this great game gives you a moment you can dominate, try your best to force your will on the game and to make good things happen. If you fail, don't stop trying and pushing yourself to do better; if you succeed, remember that you are only as good as the next opportunity.

If you can dominate a moment or two, you will have made an impact on the game even if you barely touched the ball. If we have more dominant moments than our opponent, we should win the game.

Each of you can play a part in making us a dominant team. Accept the challenge. Dominate the moment.