

Cardinal Football Traits



“Creating a Cardinal”

How to Become an Elite Cardinal

Hard Work / Effort

No one on the outside will ever understand (or care about) how hard you work.

The same is true in life. People have their own problems and challenges to deal with – they don’t have time to be incredibly impressed with how hard you’re working. Plus, everyone thinks they work hard, even people who don’t. *If you’re really working hard, you don’t need other people to validate you.* Just keep working hard and let your achievements speak for themselves.

There’s a battle mindset and an after-battle mindset and you need both.

Teach yourself to deal with stress. The best performers at anything have both a battle mindset and an after-battle mindset. It’s impossible to perform at 100% if you never drop below 50%. Most people make the mistake keeping their switch stuck at 75%. They’re always stressed, worried, and thinking about work. As a result, they always feel drained and slightly behind. A better strategy is to give everything during set times and then to shut off completely outside of those times.

Champions Don’t Complain and Be Negative

When you whine and complain, you not only weaken (and embarrass) yourself, you make the world a weaker place to live in. Quit crying to your girlfriend, friends, and family about your problems.

A lot of people, including myself, have spent countless hours talking to their friend and family about how hard or poor things are. *Poor us – we said – this is not fair. We whined and complained, and we were/are weaker for it.* Not only that, but our whining makes our institution itself weaker

Over the years, as a result of these complaints, people have had to tone down things. This is what whining does to the world. It weakens it. When you whine and complain, you not only weaken (and embarrass) yourself, you make the world a weaker place to live in. You reduce the number of opportunities people must develop themselves into leaders.

Problems are gifts. Sometimes, the thing that seems like the end of the world at the time is the same thing that makes your world a thousand times better in the long run. Very few people are willing to sacrifice temporary comfort for long-term success. “Champions do it all the time.”

There will always be walls. Walls are obstacles that stand in your way during life. When you come to these walls in life you have three choices: Quit, go around, or bust through it. If you make the choice to quit that is a defining moment in your life. This is the easy way and soon you will realize that just because you quit this path, there will always be another wall that is in your way. If you chose to go around the wall and choose a different path, obstacles in life tend to have a funny way of catching up to you and you end up coming back to the same problem again. Champions make the decision to bust through each wall. Some walls are bigger than others and you may need your supporting cast to help you out. Remember life will never be easy and there will always be another wall. It is your choice to decide which path you are going to take.

Encouraging Others is the Best Energy Boost

Some athletes are only worried about one person – me. They think that by isolating themselves and focusing on just themselves it is the only way to survive. Something will always be missing though. And keeping to themselves does not conserve energy levels as much as they think. *Challenge yourself and start encouraging other people. You will be amazed at how much this energized you.* The more you build other up, the more it will build yourself up. The key is being sincere in your efforts. Empty platitudes aren’t energizing. But real encouragement – the kind that you mean deep down – drives you forward.

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Sometimes it's Better to Turn Off Your Brain and Just Grind It Out

Sometimes life just sucks. There will be times when everything will come against you at once – people will stop supporting you, you'll run out of money, you'll run out of time, you'll catch a bad break – whatever. Don't try to find a way around the pain, go through it. Maybe you found a great opportunity, took action, and started experiencing a sense of growth and fulfillment from it. But now you've hit a plateau. Now things are hard. This is where you need to lower your shoulder and plow forward. Turn off your brain and grind. Don't think about it. Just do it.

Crazy Things Happen in Life but You Can't Let Them Distract You

Horrible things happen in life, some will happen to you and some will happen to people you love. The key is to stay on your own course no matter what happens. Too many people experience something different or scary – like getting diagnosed with a disease, getting divorced or breaking up with someone, losing a family member, or losing a job – and then start to question everything. They lose faith in themselves and their mission. Don't let this happen to you. Realize that bad things happen but, like everything, they will pass. No matter what happens, keep moving forward.

Some People Will Hate You for Working Hard – Forget Them

If you have haters or negative people in your life – get rid of them. If they're old friends or family members, keep them at a distance. There's no room in your life for negative people who want to hold you back.

The Halfway Point is the Hardest Point – Prepare for It

When you are going through a tough period in your life, figure out what's making it tough and when it will be over. Then, find the halfway point. *Once you know where the middle is, prepare for it because that's going to be where you want to quit the most.* Make sure you surround yourself with supportive people during these times – people who will keep you motivated, healthy, and mindful of the reasons why you took on this challenge in the first place.

Mischief is Energizing

All these things – games, going somewhere new, playing practical jokes – energizes you. They turned your focus outward and help you remember that there is more to the world than just grinding it out. This kind of mischief is important, but it doesn't just happen. You must make time for it. *Schedule some mischief in your life – but make it the exception, not the rule.* It will help you achieve your goals faster.

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Everything Starts With a Decision To Be A Champion

One of the first questions that our coaches will ask you is: Do you want to be a champion? If not, you should just go home now. *If you don't have a strong reason to be a South Sioux City Football player, then you will never make it to your senior year.* You will give up as soon as things get tough. Making a decision gives you a reason why – a reason why you're doing what you are doing. Because you decided. Because you committed yourself.

You can't just try to do things. People who are trying to win, trying to be a better person, trying to make a relationship work, trying to get a promotion, or trying to do whatever, will always fail. *Trying is weak. Trying is what quitters and losers do.* You must decide to do things. Decide to win. Decide to be a champion.

Looks Deceive but Actions Never Lie

When it comes to how tough someone is, looks don't matter. The only way to tell how tough someone is – the only way to tell who they really are – is to watch what they do. How do they respond under pressure? Who do they hang out with? How do they treat other people? Forget what people say and watch what they do.

Take on the Toughest Kid and Everything Else Will Seem Easy

Competing against tougher kids has a weird effect on your performance – it will make you much better much faster. *The more you challenge yourself – the more painful you make practice – the more you will improve.* Life is the same way. Putting yourself in challenging situations day in and day out fast tracks your performance and development as a leader.

Your Girlfriend Cheating on You Is Sometimes the Best Thing That Can Happen

Breakups sometimes end up being one of the best things that ever happened to you. Use it as motivation to succeed and it may help you dodge a bullet because if breaking up is easy for her then it would've never lasted anyway. *Problems are gifts.* Sometimes, the thing that seems like the end of the world at the time is the same thing that makes your world a thousand times better in the long run.

Enjoy Where You Are Now Because the Next Level Is Always Harder

It's easy in life to think that getting to the next level is going to make everything fall into place. You might think, “If I could just arrive, life would be a cakewalk.” Wrong. The next level is always harder and more time consuming. Too many people work insanely hard at something they hate to get promoted to a position that requires them to work even harder at something they hate more. Enjoy where you are now. Keep moving forward but realize that there is no arrival. There is just right now.

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You Always Have More Gas in the Tank -- Always

There is no limit to what your body can do. It's your mind that you must convince. You might need help or more knowledge or more motivation but there are no limits. Once you realize this – once you know that there is always more gas in the tank – you'll start taking on more risks. You'll push yourself harder and harder because you'll know that you always have more to give.

Success is the Result of Holding Everything Together Perfectly and All at Once

Nothing happens automatically. *Just because you make it to a new level, doesn't mean you're automatically going to stay at that next level.* As soon as you let go – as soon as you stop growing – you're going to go backwards.

People get dull by default. *If you're not sharpening yourself, you're blunting yourself.* Greatness is one big puzzle. The only way to experience the full picture is to find every piece, put it perfectly in place, and keep all the pieces together. If one piece falls out of place, everything will crumble.

People Lie About Who They Are but They Can't Lie About Who They Hang Out With

Some people take great pride in telling coaches how hard they're going to work, how much they love football, on and on. Then they will go hang out with the laziest people. As soon as their lazy friends quit, they quit. *If you want to know who someone is, look at who they hang out with. If you want to know who you are, look at the people you hang out with.* Everyone becomes the average of the five people they hang out with the most.

Find a Way to Get the Job Done Because Results Are All That Matter

Life isn't fair. When it comes to anything, you either get the right result or you don't. Most people spend their lives trying to ignore this fact but it's always there. *A is A and B is B. Success requires no explanations. Failure permits no alibis.* The sooner you accept this, the better off and freer your life will be. You'll be free because you'll have taken responsibility for your own life and where you are in it. Now, you can move forward and accomplish anything.

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The 3 Elements of Cardinal Effort

Burst

Noticeably changing speed at the moment of recognition. A good Burst comes with a good body lean.

Speed

Moving at the top speed that you can achieve.

Finish

Completing every play with a sense of urgency through the whistle.

All 11 on 11 periods and 7 on 7 periods will have a whistle! Evaluate on film these three points on each play.

- 1. If any of these elements are missing, then you are not meeting the expectations of a Cardinal***
- 2. If any of these elements are missing:***

It is a LOAF!

LOAFING = Being a traitor, Playing for the other team

We can only control ourselves. Effort is a choice. Make the choice to give constant effort on each play and it will become a habit.

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The 9 Critical Situations

1. *Win the takeaway / Give away battle*
2. *Win the penalty battle.* (Eliminate administrative penalties)
3. *Win the Compete Zone.* (+20 yard line and goal line)
4. *Win the Kicking Game.* (Field position and big plays)
5. *Win the Sudden Change.* (In position or possession)
6. *Win Short Yardage.* (3rd and less than 3)
7. *Win the 4th Quarter.* (Score differential)
8. *Win the Clock Situations.* (Conserve clock, burn clock, seconds left)
9. *Win the Must Downs.* (4th Down attempts, kicking game fakes, last play of a half or a game, 3rd Down in a buzz)

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12 Questions Coaches Ask Themselves About Every Single Player on the Roster

1. Can I trust them?

At the end of the day, coaches want 11 guys on the field they can trust to give maximum effort, that are going to execute what is being asked of them, and that will do it the right way. Trust is paramount and is always being evaluated. It can be earned by not missing workouts and summer sessions, by going above and beyond what is being asked, and by taking initiative.

2. Are they receptive to coaching?

Regardless of talent, if a player refuses to take coaching, how can the coaches possibly rely on him to do what is being asked of him on game day, or when the game is on the line? Guys that can take coaching and apply it are often labeled as "favorites" because coaches know that they can be trusted to do what is being asked of them.

3. How will/do they respond to adversity?

How a player responds after a mistake, or after being beat on a certain play says a lot about them. Do they hang their head and pout or throw a mini-temper tantrum or do they come out and respond with vigor the next chance they get? *"Body language never whispers, it always screams."*

4. How do they respond to criticism? How about praise?

A big part of coaching is preparing kids for life after sports, so keeping an eye on how they respond to both criticism and praise, and managing them both, is very important.

5. How do they act when no one is watching?

There is an old quote about true character being revealed when there are no eyes on you. Coaches prefer all guys to be made up of high character, that way they know they can be trusted to make the right decisions when their coaches and teammates aren't present.

6. What motivates them?

Coaches want guys that are motivated to do the best thing for the team, not the guys that are keeping their own stats and concerned only about their bottom line.

7. Can the team and I count on them?

Being reliable is another important area always being evaluated. Can you trust a player to be where his is supposed to be, when he is supposed to be there, doing what he is supposed to do in the manner which is expected?

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8. Do they have the trust and respect of their teammates?

To get the most out of the 11 guys on the field, everyone needs to have the trust that the man next to them is doing what they are supposed to be doing, just like in the real world. Also, getting along with teammates shows that they are able to relate to a melting pot of personalities, backgrounds, and beliefs.

9. Do they understand what is expected of them?

In order to take the field, players must know a lot, including, where to line up, what to do on a certain play, the effort that is expected, and a host of other things. If they don't understand these things, nothing will go well for them on the field.

10. What are their strengths? Weaknesses?

This is where athletes' skills and talent come into play – and it is way down the line after a bunch of other things for a reason. How can those skills help the team, and what do they need to improve on to maximize their athletic abilities?

11. How often do we have to question their effort?

Simply put, the guys who never have their effort questioned often find themselves on the field in some form or fashion. It is that simple.

12. Do they act like they WANT to be here?

We are big believers that positive energy and enthusiasm are both contagious. At the same time, it can be said that their counterparts on the other side of the spectrum are also contagious. Coaches want guys on the field and in the locker room that have a contagious energy worth spreading.

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The Attitude of a Cardinal

“Eye of the Cardinal”

- ⇒ **South Sioux City is different. We take pride in being different – We play different – We practice different. We are different from other places. We Win at Everything we do!**
 - **Let’s do it our way. 1 play at a time.**
- ⇒ **This is a tough program – for tough, physical, mean guys – if you aren’t tough you won’t make it here.**
 - **Lead the state in Effort and Toughness!**
- ⇒ **At South Sioux City “We Earn Everything!” Nothing will be given to you!**
- ⇒ **Effort is first and a must in our program. We not only push ourselves, but we push everyone around us to be the best at everything we do.**
- ⇒ **Expect to win! We never give up or stop fighting.**
- ⇒ **We understand the importance of team. You are a part of a tradition that will be established by those who have paid the price to become champions before you. You represent not only the 2019 South Sioux City Football Team, but all of those who have every played at South Sioux.**
- ⇒ **Cardinals are Elite!**

Winning Means you’re willing to go longer, work harder and give more than anyone else.

- Vince Lombardi

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Teaching Players to Compete

The 6 Second Competitor

In every competition it is visibly possible to see effort but is it a productive effort. Competition in an athlete comes from an inner feeling, a willingness to allow oneself to extend his or her body beyond mental desire.

So many athletes start out strong, but don't finish strong. Many of these athletes think they work hard. However, those that don't finish are not competitive.

Once again, the athlete who is consistent in effort is the most valuable type of player. The athlete that makes his body perform against all odds and against all levels of resistance is a competitor.

Throughout this total competitive effort, you see a burning desire without hesitation to get the job done. Look to see if a player is taking the easy way out of work. Is he avoiding physical contact by taking the long way around the play or deliberately arriving late at the point of attack?

Remember, initial effort counts, but finishing the play strong is the sign of a good competitor.

While evaluation your players on the field, you must constantly critique him as a competitor. Is he a 3 second, 4 second, or 5 second competitor? What we are looking for is a ***"6 Second Competitor."***

You can coach and teach a player to be a great competitor!

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