THE SPORTS PLAYBOOK

Building Teams that Outperform, Year after Year

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INTRODUCTION

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In 2002, the New England Patriots of the NFL upset the heavily favored St. Louis Rams to win their first Super Bowl. The usual celebratory scenes followed: confetti fell to the ground, some players sunk to their knees and cried, first-year starting quarterback Tom Brady excitedly slapped the shoulders of the team's former starter Drew Bledsoe, and hugs flowed. Even coach Bill Belichick, known for his stoicism, embraced family members and players. Belichick described the unexpected achievement as "miraculous." His description was less of a commentary on the game, which the Patriots largely controlled, than on the fact that the organization he was building was far ahead of schedule. His goal that season was not to win his first Super Bowl; his goal was to assemble a team that could compete to win Super Bowls season after season. In his view, this Patriots team had not reached that level yet. When Belichick was asked how many players would have to be replaced to be that good, he replied "About twenty."[1] He underestimated the number of changes he would make. Two seasons later the Pats won their second Super Bowl after replacing 34 players who were on the 2001 roster.

The rest of the story is well known. The Patriots won their third Super Bowl in four seasons in 2005, won two of the next four in which they appeared, and have only failed to qualify for the playoffs once since the 2002 season.[2] Perhaps the most remarkable part of their success is the fact that it has been achieved during the "salary cap" era. Before 1993, NFL teams could focus on accumulating talent, as owners were free to spend as much money as they wanted on players. Belichick, by contrast, has been forced to release some of his best players because the NFL caps how much money teams can spend. The NFL's goal was to control costs and foster competitive balance, but the Pats have defied the odds to become a dynasty.

Almost everyone focuses on pure talent as the pathway to predicting success in sports. Even with the Patriots, and with 20/20 hindsight, most people see their

success as inevitable given the obvious talent of Tom Brady as their quarterback. But talent, it turns out, is rarely a good predictor of sports success.

Take the Los Angeles Clippers. Over the course of the franchise's first 30-plus years they selected players with one of the first five picks in the NBA draft 12 times. And many of their first round selections went on to enjoy highly successful careers. During the 1980s, for example, they drafted Tom Chambers, Terry Cummings, Byron Scott, Danny Manning, and Hersey Hawkins. A quintet like that would be expected to serve as the foundation for a team that made the playoffs almost every season during the 80s and early 90s. Indeed, Chambers played in four all-star games, Cummings played in two, Hawkins in one, and Scott started on three championship teams. The problem was that all of these players enjoyed their greatest success only after they left the Clippers and joined other teams! The Clippers did not qualify for the playoffs even once during the 80s. Led by Manning, who played in two all-star games, the Clips qualified for the playoffs twice in the early 90s, but they were eliminated in the first round on both occasions. Manning was then traded to the Atlanta Hawks, and Los Angeles only managed to qualify for the playoffs two more times before the 2011–12 season. The major North American leagues all use a draft system that is designed to promote competitive balance by stacking the deck in favor of losing teams, but for a third of a century the Clippers rarely rose to the level of even being mediocre. Why didn't their obvious pool of talent bring success?

Clippers 1st Round Draft Picks			
Year	Previous Season Win %	Pick	Selection(s)
1980	.427	9	Michael Brook
1981	.439	8	Tom Chambers
1982	.207	2	Terry Cummings
1983	.305	4	Byron Scott
1984	.366	8	Lancaster Gordon
1985	.378	3	Benoit Benjamin
1986	.390	Traded to 76ers	
1987	.146	7, 13, 19	Reggie Williams, Joe Wolf, Ken Norman
1988	.207	1, 6	Danny Manning, Hersey Hawkins
1989	.256	2	Danny Ferry
1990	.366	8, 13	Bo Kimble, Loy Vaught
1991	.378	22	LeRon Ellis
1992	.549	16, 25	Randy Woods, Elmore Spencer
1993	.500	13	Terry Dehere
1994	.329	7	Lamond Murray
1995	.207	2	Antonio McDyess
1996	.354	7	Lorenzen Wright
1997	.439	14	Maurice Taylor
1998	.207	1	Michael Olowokandi
1999	.180	4	Lamar Odom
2000	.183	3, 18	Darius Miles, Quentin Richardson
2001	.378	2	Tyson Chandler
2002	.476	8, 12	Chris Wilcox, Melvin Ely
2003	.329	6	Chris Kaman
2004	.341	3	Shaun Livingston
2005	.451	12	Yaroslav Korolev
2006	.573	No Pick	
2007	.488	14	Al Thornton
2008	.280	7	Eric Gordon
2009	.232	1	Blake Griffin

FIGURE 0.1 Los Angeles Clippers win percentages against the rank of their lottery picks[3]

For as long as sports teams and athletes have competed, they have spent time trying to find out what will make them successful, what will help them excel and win at whatever game or athletic challenge they face. And for as long as teams and athletes have competed, success (as well as failure) often defies the expectations of players, coaches, fans, and commentators. The age old question of "What makes particular athletes and teams successful?" remains fundamentally unanswered, even in the age of big data and analytics.

Learning of any kind, sports included, starts with the most basic approach—trial and error. And the essence of trial and error is in recognizing what worked (success!) and what didn't (failure!). Patterns for success are therefore learned. Activities that led to success in the past are repeated, tested again. Even unrelated activities that become linked to success are tried, and tried again, sometimes leading to strange rituals, superstitions, and even obsessions. Celtics' coach Red Auerbach, for example, insisted that center Bill Russell vomit right before every game, since that had happened before the Celtics won in the past. Building on the activities and learnings of what leads to success and what leads to failure is central to achieving the ongoing, long-term goal of sports—winning.

> "(Bill Russell) did it before every game. I mean he did it loudly before every game. We had this little tiny locker room in the (Boston) Garden and he would be in there getting violently sick. It was awful to listen to. But most nights, it worked.
>
> "One year, we're playing the Lakers. Game 7. I give my pregame talk and we go out on the court. We're going through layups and all of a sudden it occurs to me: Russell didn't throw up. I go out on the court and I say, "Everyone back in the locker room." They're looking at me like I'm nuts. There's less than 10 minutes on the clock until tip off . . . We go back into the locker room and I say, 'Russell, you forgot to throw up! Go do it right now!' Without a word he went into the bathroom and did it.
>
> "And we won the game."
>
> *Let Me Tell You a Story,* by John Feinstein and Red Auerbach, Back Bay Books; New York (2005), pp. 220–1.

While individual athletes need to be good at this basic process, sports teams need to be even better, operating at a higher and more complex level to develop what leads to winning with larger groups of athletes. The levels of complexity facing team sports are orders of magnitude higher than at the individual athlete level, which is why long-term, team-sport "dynasties" are rare, regardless of the sport

involved. Yet any team that can master the repeatable steps that lead to success will be at the top level of their sport far more often than teams who seem to simply "get lucky" in a given season.

Take the Colorado Rockies, a small-market Major League Baseball team with no championship history. In 2006, the club finished fourth in its division with a mediocre 76–84 record. With few changes to its roster, not much more was expected in 2007. Yet the Rockies that year confounded everyone. The team won a franchise-record 90 games, delivering one of the best performances in history in the month of September, at one point winning 21 of 22 games. What followed was a wildcard berth in the playoffs. In the first round, again confounding expectations, they swept the Philadelphia Phillies three games to none. Moving on to their next opponent, the division-winning Arizona Diamondbacks, they again swept the series, this time in four games, punching their ticket to the World Series. Their luck seemed to run out in the Fall Classic, however, where they were swept themselves, four games straight, by the Boston Red Sox.

But a turning point appeared to have been reached. This was a strong team, a winning team, and the club arrived at spring training for the next season riding high, the majority of its roster from the previous season intact. Unfortunately, little of the championship season of 2007 was repeated, the team falling back to a 74–88 record, far out of the playoffs. The four subsequent seasons saw a small surge of success in 2009 with another playoff appearance (losing in the first round), which was followed by ever-decreasing success, all the way down to a 64–98 record in 2012 and last place in the NL West division. A short burst of success in the middle of a long run below average.

Compare this to four seemingly different football teams spanning the NCAA and NFL.

The University of San Diego, in 2004, turned in a 7–4 season, a rare winning season for the Toreros football team. The following two years were astonishing, with back-to-back seasons of 11–1 and Pioneer League championships. What seemed to cause this success? The hiring of a new head coach, Jim Harbaugh, at the start of the 2004 season. In 2007, after the stunning success in San Diego, Harbaugh took over as head coach of Stanford, a team in a long slump, going a dismal 1–11 in 2006. In 2007, they improved marginally, to 4–8, and again marginally in 2008 to 5–7. The corner turned, as it had in San Diego, in 2009, where Stanford went 8–5, with a trip to the Sun Bowl. In 2010, the climb continued with a 12–1 season, a victory in the Orange Bowl, and a ranking of fourth in the nation. Harbaugh then took his winning ways to the San Francisco 49ers of the NFL in 2011. The 49ers were a team in decline, with an 8–8 record in 2009, falling to a 6–10 record in 2010. In his first season in San Francisco, the 49ers under Harbaugh went 13–3, one game shy of a trip to the Super Bowl. In 2012 the team went 11–4–1, playing in the Super Bowl and losing in a close game to Baltimore. In 2013, they again posted an outstanding season at 12–4—the culmination of Harbaugh's nine

years of consistent, clear success—and another trip to the playoffs. After a disappointing 2014 season in San Francisco, Harbaugh accepted the head coaching job at his *alma mater* the University of Michigan, and proceeded to turn their fortunes around. Harbaugh had delivered success with four different teams with four different rosters, all under trying but unique circumstances. Such consistent success is almost certainly not accidental.

So, what causes this? What causes some teams to consistently underperform, even with the odd blip of success, yet never managing strong, sustained success? What causes other teams to perform at the highest level, year after year, with player changes, even coaching changes? Why is one example of success fleeting, while the other appears to be a renewable resource?

Examining why a few teams become dynasties while others flounder for long periods of time is one of the chief preoccupations that comes with following sports. Fans, players, coaches, and front office personnel endlessly discuss and debate these issues. Sports talk shows would go out of business without them. And long-form articles, books, and documentaries are filled with behind-the-scenes facts and retrospective quotes, all purporting to make sense of the success of organizations like the Patriots or failures like the Clippers.

The key question is this—what are the ingredients to success? In sports, this question gets asked in myriad ways as coaches, administrators, athletes, and supporters seek to uncover the secrets behind winning. There are many examples of systems, of approaches that focus on specific areas of sports achievement thought to cause or contribute to success. Nike's SPARQ program, for example, identifies key sport-specific physical skills that correlate to high performance. Oakland Athletics general manager Billy Beane's approach (demonstrated in the book and movie *Moneyball*) used the power of statistical analysis to dispel pervasive myths by putting data ahead of simply identifying raw talent. Axon Sports offers a neuroscience-based cognitive skills approach in recognition of the role "neck-up" brain-related skills play in harnessing physical talent effectively. Many motivational speakers visit teams to provide inspiration.

All of these approaches attempt to solve one or more of the many problems that undermine performance for teams and individuals. All may have some success, depending on the context. While these many approaches may help specific areas that contribute to team success, none of them go to the root of the issue, the underlying skills and tools, the foundational framework upon which long-term success is built.

The purpose of this book is to look at these kinds of successes and failures more systematically, from the point of view of organizational development as well as conflict and dispute management. What makes some organizations successful for long periods of time, while others rarely if ever reach their potential? The way Belichick runs the Patriots is in some ways very different from how Pat Summitt ran the University of Tennessee's women's basketball program or Gregg Popovich coaches the San Antonio Spurs, but we hope to show that they have all created alignment between their front office, coaching staff, players, and other important stakeholders.

By contrast, we will also show how teams that underachieve are often character-ized by misalignment and organizational chaos. The Clippers did not struggle for three decades just because they made a series of bad personnel decisions. They struggled because, under owner Donald Sterling, they lacked a coherent plan to succeed.

Most of the examples and case studies we will use center around famous teams, coaches and athletes. We think these high-profile examples will make this subject matter more interesting and easier to apply. We say "apply" because we believe our book will bring value to anyone who coaches or manages any sports team that prioritizes competitive success over simple participation, as well as to anyone involved in running a business or complex organization. Our aim is to provide you with a step-by-step template that can be customized to meet your team or organization's goals and needs.

The current system actually prevents success

Today's sports coaches are among a class of professionals who collectively live with a skewed view of reality, driven by the essence of sport itself—winning, and win-ning now. At the highest levels of sport, this all-consuming goal of "winning now" often prevents coaches from creating the team structures, team relationships, and team focus that sets the stage for long-term, ongoing success. In the past, winning was viewed as a longer-term project.

Take the Dallas Cowboys of the NFL when they hired coach Tom Landry. In 1963, the Cowboys had just completed their fourth consecutive losing sea-son. Their 4–10 record was especially disappointing considering the fact that some prognosticators, including *Sports Illustrated*, predicted that Dallas would win the Eastern Conference. Not surprisingly, a lot of fans and local press wanted coach Tom Landry's scalp. Far from bowing to public pressure, president Tex Schramm successfully persuaded owner Clint Murchison to extend Landry's contract—for ten years![4] Schramm's faith proved justified. Landry led the Cowboys to 18 playoff appearances and five Super Bowls, including two victories between 1966 and 1985.

No coach today would expect to be afforded a similar amount of time and patience, let alone receive a ten-year contract extension after a 4–10 campaign.

This doesn't mean that just about any team, now and then, isn't successful. The Colorado Rockies made it all the way to the World Series, after all. Unfortunately, it was not because of a successful team foundation, it was something else. Luck, perhaps? Or a lucky convergence of talent?

So what makes one team, even one athlete, win, win big once, and fade away? In golf, for example, there are many more cases of journeymen golfers who win one major and fade from view forever compared to the Tiger Woods, Jack Nick-laus, and Arnold Palmers of the world. What caused that success in the first place, and why didn't it work long-term for many of them? Even more importantly, what causes some teams to dramatically improve, say, when a new coach arrives, and remain at the top of their game, often with the same personnel in place from

the previous losing seasons? What accounts for the story of the Rockies, compared to the story of the San Diego Toreros, the Stanford Cardinal, the 49ers, or the Michigan Wolverines?

Myths of success

The most pervasive myths about sports success are the beliefs that success is primarily driven by either talent, or luck, or both. The history of sport is littered with highly talented players and teams who failed to win anything. And luck is, well, luck—it is rarely the long-term reason for team success. While entertaining, luck is not the currency of consistent success.

Most organizations, coaches, sports writers, and managers therefore focus heavily on talent, on recruiting, drafting, and trading as a way to improve the team. And well they should, since talent is a key ingredient. It is, however, nowhere near the reason for sustained success. In other words, talent is necessary, but not sufficient. The stories of teams that "buy" talent are legion, and while at times it delivers short-term success, the frequency that talent seriously underperforms disproves the idea that talent equals success. In addition, many highly touted and talented athletes fail to deliver on-field and are traded for a pittance, only to emerge and perform brilliantly elsewhere.

Take the San Antonio Spurs, who have been a symbol of consistent success with a knack for maximizing the talents of their athletes and coaches. This is a team that has won five Championships and more than 50 games each season for the last 16 years.[5] This, in an era of salary caps and heightened competition. At first blush, it is tempting to attribute success to the "luck of the draft" lottery process that netted them the talented David Robinson and, later, Tim Duncan. However, deeper examination reveals a far more systemic approach. This is a team that has core values, clear goals, and key elements in place, year after year, to ensure Peak Performance. They treat every player the same—coach Gregg Popovich yelled at Duncan just as much as the 12th man.

The organization comes first and everything will be discussed by everyone: "We believe that none of us are as smart as all of us," notes owner Peter Holt. Clear roles are defined—Holt lets Popovich and Buford make the personnel decisions—with the caveat that the players, in addition to having talent, must also be of "good character." They emphasize a global search for players, and once they are part of the organization every player must be willing to play for the team, not for themselves—defending and passing the ball, and so on. In short, they have a *system,* a framework and approach, that works—and they win regularly, year after year.

So, while talent is certainly needed, long-term successful teams know how to apply that talent, how to engage it, and how to harness and channel it so it's all left on the field, not in the locker room. In other words, successful teams have a playbook, a roadmap, a process for engaging the whole team in a way that allows

every ounce of talent to be put to its highest and best use—with little wasted on destructive team conflict or internal friction. At the end of the day, it's the off-field team success that facilitates the on-field team success.

Another common myth of team success is the issue of conflict. Many believe that conflict on a team in and of itself destroys team unity and team cohesion. The prescription for many, therefore, is team harmony. There is a long-held belief that only low-conflict groups can achieve at high levels of performance. This, however, is simply not borne out in practice.

In the 1960s German Olympic rowing teams achieved great success, including winning the gold at the 1960 Olympics, despite the fact that the team was rife with internal conflicts. The rowers experienced disharmony on a personal level to the point that they openly formed cliques, and disputes could only be resolved with the coaches' intervention. Yet they won anyway, because the basic framework for effective team dynamics along with a shared desire to win was still present. More modern examples include the Los Angeles Lakers of the early 2000s which featured a strained relationship between its two superstars, Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant, yet continued to perform at a championship level. The New York Yankees won the 2009 World Series and had consistent playoff appearances, in spite of the fact that two key players, Derek Jeter and Alex Rodriguez, did their best to ignore each other. The 2013 Philadelphia Eagles featured a wide receiver, Riley Cooper, who made overtly racist remarks that set off a firestorm in the locker room, and yet that team exceeded preseason expectations and made the playoffs. So, harmony may make for a "nice" environment, but harmony at all costs isn't the ingredient that leads to success. Many teams have had wonderful interpersonal relationships and performed abysmally.[6]

After Jeter glared at A-Rod following a missed pop fly in 2006, general manager Brian Cashman had to step in and remind the shortstop that everyone can see his resentment. Cashman also told Jeter to fake a congenial relationship with Rodriguez. So acrimonious were Jeter's feelings towards A-Rod that the Yankees were afraid to even broach the subject with him.

"It would've been the last conversation I ever had with Derek," a Yankee official said . . . of bringing up A-Rod to Jeter. "I would've been dead to him. It would've been like approaching Joe DiMaggio to talk to him about Marilyn Monroe."

"A Brief History of Derek Jeter and Alex Rodriguez's Roller Coaster Relationship," by Ryan Bork, *Newsweek*, May 11, 2017: www.newsweek.com/alex-rodriguez-derek-jeter-history-607464

So, if the answer isn't talent, and if the answer isn't harmony, what is?

Long-term success—culture

For teams to be successful and stay successful, they must progress on the path that all successful human activity follows to achieve excellence on an ongoing basis. In other words, successful teams have, at their base, a winning culture. Coaches and teams today will spend untold hours reviewing game film, play design, personnel choices, analytics that measure just above everything, and yet will spend virtually no time reviewing, planning, and implementing a team culture that supports success.

Building a winning culture, at the simplest level, means helping the team advance through these three phases that all successful teams go through:

1. IN THE WEEDS—*Chaos*, or Random Application of Talent
2. IN THE GAME—*Repeatability*, or Structured Application of Talent
3. ON THE PODIUM—*Peak Performance*, or the Effective and Optimal Application of Talent

In the weeds—culture of Chaos

Early in any team process, the starting point is Chaos, where effort and talent are applied, but applied in an instinctual or random way. In team tryouts for example, each individual athlete is playing his or her own game, reacting to the flow of the sport, trying to demonstrate their own personal talent. The result on the field is chaotic, with brief moments of brilliance as individual talent shines through. Teams with talent alone, or more specifically, teams that rely on talent alone, live essentially at the level of Chaos. These are the teams, like the 2007 Colorado Rockies, that can ride talent for brief periods of time to high levels of success. From a fan's perspective, these teams exemplify the unpredictability of sport. Unfortunately, this random approach to sport is not an essential part of sport itself, but rather a quality of teams that lack a system for creating the structure and Repeatability that leads to Peak Performance.

Teams that rely on a culture of talent alone tend to acquire superstars, have different sets of rules for high performers, and tend to undervalue team cohesion and teamwork itself. This is often seen when teams "buy" talent, bringing in star players carrying huge salaries. Unless there is a strong team culture that goes beyond talent, the rest of the team will likely feel like second-class citizens, may secretly wish that the superstar fails, and may undermine the very talent that was brought in to help the team. With more than one highly talented player on the team, friction and ego that often accompanies talent may diminish performance rather than enhance it. A culture purely based on talent is one that inevitably leads to Chaos over performance.

In the game—culture of Repeatability

Teams at the Repeatability level establish a culture that channels and magnifies the talent on the team. A culture of Repeatability demands that talent be focused into a number of consistently good habits and structures that reduce the negative impacts of Chaos and introduce a degree of predictability to a team's endeavors. With good

structure and a team culture that supports team success, talent is able to repeat its successes, over and over. It is only through Repeatability that successful strategies can be captured and perfected.

Successful teams that create a culture of Repeatability can have sustained success on many levels—new players are brought into a system that maximizes their talent, and coaches adapt their systems more effectively to new talent and approaches. Repeatability gives teams the foundation and framework to begin to consistently apply the talent they have, and put it to good use. Teams in the Repeatability stage will bypass a clearly more talented player in the draft in order to take a specific role-player to fit their system.

Yet, Repeatability is only a stepping stone—not an endgame—toward maximizing performance at a Peak level.

On the podium—culture of Peak Performance

The only way teams truly thrive at high levels of success for long periods of time is at the Peak Performance Level. Only at the Peak level are the clear structures and processes developed in the Repeatability phase leveraged and honed to deliver long-term success. Like the Chaos phase, the Peak Performance phase shows constant variability and change. Unlike in the raw talent-focused Chaos phase, here variation in routines and practices is not due to a lack of structure and alignment but, instead is driven by detailed awareness of how best to engage all parts of the machine. In other words, talent cannot simply be acquired or bought with the expectation that talent will automatically blossom on the field of play. Instead, talent is cultivated and magnified by channeling it through an approach, a system, which ensures strengths are leveraged and weaknesses improved upon. A culture of Peak Performance can only be reached once a team has already achieved Repeatability.
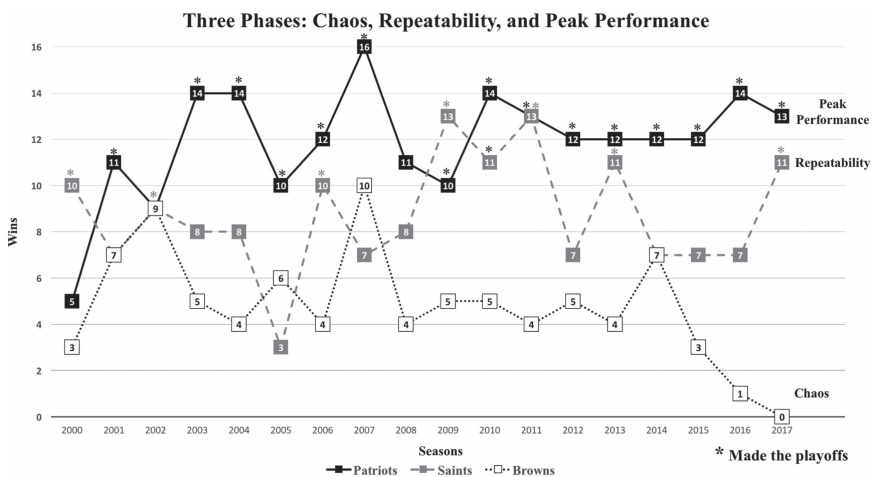
FIGURE 0.2 Chaos takes a team just about everywhere; Repeatability starts to smooth out the ups and downs, with a clear trend upward; Peak Performance creates long-term, sustainable success

Consider the record of Alabama football coach Nick Saban. He began his tenure in 2007 at Alabama where he started to lay his foundation for team success, and went 7–6 during this transition year. 2008 began a string of consistent and dominant performances with a 12–2 record and a Sugar Bowl appearance. 2009 brought a 14–0 record along with a National Championship (their first in 17 years). They repeated as National Champions in 2011 and 2012, and remained a dominant presence consistently in the Top Ten nationally. They added National Championships in 2015 and 2017 as well.

Saban is often referred to as the "Nicktator", seeming to imply it's because of Nick himself, or because of his seemingly dictatorial approach, that the team has success. In reality, Saban succeeds by employing advanced managerial techniques, many of which are used by business, to first build a culture of Repeatability, then to foster alignment, common purpose, and approach between his players and coaching staff that leads to Peak Performance.

For example, each season he collaborates with his staff and players to form a "mission statement" which highlights key team goals, and he helps create metrics that can be used to measure the extent to which they have been achieved for all team members to see. He delegates power to players, who play an integral role in establishing and enforcing academic and behavioral expectations. And he takes a holistic approach, seeking to identify every factor that impacts successful performance, both on and off the field, and then develops a plan and allocates resources to address every issue. Alabama spends as much on support staff as any other football program in the country, and no expense is spared to address issues ranging from film study of recruits, which they call "quality control," to academic support for players.[7]

The result is a culture of Peak Performance, one that continues to succeed, year after year, with players (and sometimes assistant coaches) coming and going regularly. That is a culture of success.

The Playbook for success

We now come back to our main question. What are the tools, skills, approaches that take a team from Chaos, to Repeatability, to Peak Performance? If it's not talent, not luck, and not harmony, what is it?

The answer is this: culture. And to create a winning culture requires a system, a Playbook, a clear framework to guide and channel each team toward success, year in and year out. Within that system there is, of course, no single or "magic" answer. Each team's Playbook may be different, just as each team's culture is different, but the process, the milestones, and the markers each team needs to put in place are the same. It is and must be an optimal and repeatable approach, a process that creates and embeds success in the fabric of what the team does. Not unlike the physical skills that underlie each sport, there is an entire set of additional skills teams must develop and implement in order to maximize team talent and achieve great success.

This book is that Playbook for team success. It is about treating culture like the most important play the team will ever run. The process, approach, and tools in

this book allow teams to get through Chaos quickly, to build Repeatability that can be developed and enhanced, and that take everyone on the team to high-level Peak Performance and long-term success.

The reality is simply this: bad apples come from bad apple factories. Good apples come from good apple factories. And random results come from a lack of repeatable practices in the factory.

In this book, we'll show you how to lay a foundation for strong team relationships built on repeatable practices. We'll show you how to move the team out of Chaos quickly and into Repeatability, and from Repeatability to Peak Performance. And we'll offer you some simple, focused tools for ensuring the activities and behaviors on the team create success, regularly, both on and off the field. We'll show you how to build a winning team culture.

Average organizations either have no clear plan, or they rely on talent as their only foundation. Good organizations, coaches, and athletes have a plan for winning the game on the field. In great organizations, however, coaches and athletes have a Playbook for Peak Performance both on and off the field. The models and tools in this book will help get you there, every step of the way.

IDEAS FOR REVIEW: INTRODUCTION

Important points

- The myths of success: talent is rarely the deciding factor. Neither is internal harmony, hard work, or even superstitions or luck. Success results from repeatable patterns of behavior, first and foremost.
- Success is complex, and often starts from, and is prone to return to, Chaos. Successful teams and athletes build Repeatability first—how can we build patterns of behavior that regularly lead to winning? Only after a foundation of Repeatability is created can Peak Performance be achieved and sustained.
- There is a Playbook for long-term success. It's a series of tools applied year after year off the field that creates success on the field.

Think about this

- Success in sports is complex. What behaviors have you seen that contribute to winning? Has winning been sustained, or simply been "accidental," or a one-off occurrence?
- Why do most athletes and teams that actually reach the peak of success rarely repeat that success the following season?
- How many golfers have won multiple tournaments every year for over a decade, like Tiger Woods?

- How have some teams become dynasties, such as:
  - 1980s and 1990s San Francisco 49ers?
  - the San Antonio Spurs since 1998?
  - 1980s Los Angeles Lakers?
  - the Tennessee's women's basketball team for more than three decades?
  - the German men's national soccer team?
  - Alabama's football team since Nick Saban became head coach in 2007?
  - How many teams have been a one-and-done success, compared to the teams above?

Endnotes

1 *War Room: The Legacy of Bill Belichick and the Art of Building the Perfect Team* by Michael Holley, Harper Collins; New York, (2011), p. 48.
2 In 2008, Tom Brady suffered a season-ending injury in the team's first game.
3 See www.espn.com/espn/page2/story/_/page/clippers%2F090624
4 *America's Game: The Epic Story of How Pro Football Captured a Nation* by Michael Mac-Cambridge, Random House; New York (2004), p. 214.
5 The Spurs would have won 50 games the 18th season as well, if not for the strike that dramatically shortened the 1998/99 season. Their record was 37–13 and they won the NBA title.
6 "Top Performance Despite Internal Conflict: An Antithesis to a Hypothesis Widely Held in Sociological Functioning," by G. Lueschen, *Team Dynamics. Essays in the Sociology and Social Psychology of Sport Including Methodological and Epistemological Issues*, ed. by Hans Lenk, Eric Clearinghouse; Washington, DC, (1977), pp. 52–7.
7 *How Good Do You Want to Be? A Champions Tips on How to Lead and Succeed* by Nick Saban, Balantine Books; New York, (2007), see especially, Part 2, Chapter 1, The Product, pp. 25–66.