

Four players needed for a championship team

1. The Stud

- Every great team has at least one player who everyone considers a “stud.”
- This player is so accomplished that everyone in the gym knows that they can take over the match.
- The mere presence of a stud gives your team a tremendous psychological edge.
- Studs may be short on other attributes, but they are physically intimidating.
- Preferably, this player will be a left-side hitter, but anyone can ascend to the role.
- Studs will want the ball at critical moments.
- They will always show up and never hide.
- They will usually be the reason you win a close match.
- They don't mind carrying a heavy load. In fact, they take pride in it.
- This is a difficult role to accept. It requires a player who possesses an enormous level of confidence that borders on cockiness.

2. The Winner

- Every great team is blessed with at least one all-out winner.
- A winner never contemplates the possibility of losing.
- No matter what the circumstances, no matter how far behind, no matter how much bad fortune has come their way, winners play every point as if they have a chance to win the match.
- These players are courageous and take risks.
- Their commitment to winning is infectious, and they often carry the emotional load for their team.
- Preferably, this player is a setter, but anyone can take this role.
- Key ingredient? An unshakeable belief that the team can win under any circumstances.
- This player needs to be a great communicator who isn't afraid to express feelings in front of teammates.
- Winners make everyone around them feel good about themselves.
- They also are positive and present themselves enthusiastically at all times.
- This player must have enough “game time” to be credible.
- Most important: they believe and they make others believe.

3. The Stabilizer

- Most athletes aren't sufficiently skilled to be studs or psychologically equipped to be winners.
- Yet championship teams are heavily populated with players who fit neither role. Instead, they play a stabilizing role.
- These are usually low-error players who are seldom the primary reason your team wins but never the reason it loses.
- They are often referred to by coaches as role players. They set the stage so the studs and winners can function.
- Stabilizers are motivated to be role players and work within the system.

- They get along with everyone and are great teammates.
- Expectations of them on the court are limited.
- They keep everyone else on an even keel and are quick to snuff out brush fires.
- They are consistent, reliable.
- They assist team leaders in making sure teammates follow team guidelines.
- Stabilizers are a good influence in locker room.
- They have a mature perspective on life.

4. The Leader

- A championship team must have a leader.
- Leaders are players who do the right thing and model championship behavior.
- They use the right voice inflection, pick the right time to address a situation, know how to approach each teammate, know how to energize the team when it starts to sag and are in command of their emotions at all times.
- Leaders know what buttons to push when the team needs to be rescued from going down the wrong path.
- They accept the role of holding the team together and yelling when everyone seems to be in full retreat.
- These players must command the respect of their teammates.
- They have the courage to stand alone.
- They are fearless in confronting teammates and situations needing attention.
- They have a skilled liaison between players and coaches and know when to involve coaches.
- Leaders can be a starter or a non-starter. This is a people-skill role, not necessarily tied to play.
- This player initiates comebacks during competition and is fearless and charismatic.
- This player has earned the right to lead.
- The first person a leader has to lead is herself/himself.
- Leaders know their teammates won't listen if they don't walk the walk.
- Leaders realize that some people are going to respond and others will be a pain in the ass.
- A leader should never give up on anyone.
- They are not judgmental, and they show an equal loyalty to everyone.
- The leader knows that some people will fight them every step of the way, but they also know that they have to take that player with them.
- Leaders have to make uncomfortable decisions that will cause people to dislike them. Their job is not to be everyone's friend.
- Their job is to lead.