

Winning as a Team

As a player in the National Basketball Association, A.C. Green Jr. earned the nickname Iron Man for playing 1,192 straight games – a record in the NBA and American Basketball Association. His professional career was from 1985 to 2001.

A Christian, Green now runs youth camps through his A.C. Green Youth Foundation, promoting abstinence until marriage. Deeply religious, he is well known for proclaiming that he began and ended his NBA career as a virgin. During his playing days, according to *Wikipedia*, his teammates would frequently send women to tempt him to compromise his morals. Instead, Green would respond by calmly quoting scripture.

In his book, *Victory*, Green said men often talk about their glory years in high school. “At Benson High School in Portland, Oregon, I was a sports-minded, egotistical maniac. I was the tallest guy on the team and could have broken scoring records, but Coach Gray wouldn’t let me. Even with the brakes on, twice that year I scored 39 points, and in the season finale against Wilson, I scored 40.



“I averaged 27 points per game. As a team, we scored more than 100 points in seven games and averaged over 90. I was voted the *Oregonian*’s 1981 All-Metro area player of the year.”

The coach wouldn’t allow Green to be a hot-shot scorer, however, because he was more interested in the final statistic – becoming No. 1 in basketball in the state. He knew the only way the players could reach that championship level was for them to become team players.

“In basketball and in life, everyone starts out with a what’s-in-it-for-me attitude,” Green says. “That natural selfishness has to be broken to be a winner. You have to realize you can’t do it all by yourself. You need the team. Coach Gray made me pass the ball and play unselfishly. Regardless of individual stats, we, the team, reached the top. We went all the way.”

That kind of approach works in health care as well. We all need each other. Every associate is essential in the pursuit of the best outcomes for our residents.

When we understand that, and work together as an efficient team, we are regarded as champions in the eyes of our customers.

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another (Proverbs 27:17 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter