

# Leadership in Cinema



Wildland Fire Leadership Development Program

(Partnership with Drexel University's LeBow College of Business students  
<http://www.lebow.drexel.edu/index.php>)

## *A League of Their Own*

Submitted by: Dana D'Angelo..... E-mail: [dangeldc@drexel.edu](mailto:dangeldc@drexel.edu)  
Phone: 571-439-0034  
Studio: Columbia Pictures ..... Released: 1992  
Genre: Comedy/Drama/Sports ..... Audience Rating: PG  
Runtime: 128 minutes

## Materials

Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles (<https://www.nwcg.gov/wfldp/values>)

Daniel Goleman's Six Styles of Leadership (<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/emotional-leadership.htm>)

Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership  
(<http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/About-section-Our-Approach.aspx>)

## Objective

To introduce students to the leadership theories of the Wildland Fire Leadership Values and Principles, Daniel Goleman's Six Styles of Leadership and Kouzes' and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, and as well as to explore the nature of gender differences in leadership through the film "*A League of Their Own*".

## Basic Plot

In America during World War II, when men are being sent overseas, a women's baseball league is suggested. Two sisters, Dottie Hinson and Kit Keller are recruited when a talent scout sees them play. They are taken to Chicago where they join the All American Girls Professional Baseball League. However, the girls must contend with league managers who don't take the girls seriously as ball players and treat them as sexualized novelties, as well as a drunken team manager, Jimmy Dugan.

## Cast of Main Characters

Tom Hanks .....	Jimmy Dugan
Geena Davis .....	Dottie Hinson
Madonna .....	Mae Mordabito
Lori Petty .....	Kit Keller
Jon Lovitz .....	Ernie Capadino
Megan Cavanagh .....	Marla Hooch
Rosie O'Donnell .....	Doris Murphy
Bitty Schram .....	Evelyn Gardner

## Facilitation Options

1. Assign applicable readings before class time.
2. Review highlights of the readings and theories that will be applied to the film.
3. Advise students to take notes during the film on how the leadership ideas are being used.
4. Show film, "*A League of Their Own*", pause after important scenes that relate to leadership to let students take notes as well as discuss.
5. Break into small groups to encourage new ideas among students.
6. Go over the discussion questions under each section with the groups and make them answer them for homework.
7. Have the class discuss their answers for the discussion questions.
8. Offer the class specific theories of leadership and ask them to relate these theories to scenes and characters in the movie.
9. Encourage students to relate ideas from the film to personal and real-world experiences as well as other movies previously studied.

## THE WILDLAND FIRE LEADERSHIP VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

### Objective

Students will identify and relate ideas from wildland fire to the film “*A League of Their Own*” and the characters within the film. They will use the values and principles discussed and synthesize them with other ideas on leadership.

### **Duty**

**Make sound and timely decisions** – Dottie Hinson says she will not go to tryouts for the All American Girls Professional Baseball League and Ernie Capadino really wants her to go as he knows how successful she would be. Ernie Capadino allows Kit Keller to go to tryouts because she is able to convince Dottie Hinson to go. Even though Kit Keller is not as great of a player, Ernie Capadino needed to take what he could get if that meant Dottie Hinson would join the team.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7krYJUfFv4&list=PL-RKcGbQ01zVAAIryUmTwScVX5K-Zm9Cv>

Develop your subordinates for the future - Mae Mordabito teaches Shirley Baker how to read so she will be able to be more successful in the future.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0YyuppDBJw>

### **Respect**

**Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being** - Marla Mordabita is a great baseball player but Ernie Capadino won't let her join the team because she is ugly. Dottie Hinson stands up for Marla Hooch because she knows she would be an asset, so she says she will not go to tryouts unless Marla Hooch can attend as well.

**Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being** - A mailman comes bearing news of someone's death in the military but can't give the news because he left a sheet back at the post office. This causes distress in all the girls because many of them have husbands in the war, so Jimmy Dugan takes the mail from the mailman even though he is not supposed to. He stands up for the girls and allows Betty Horn (who lost her husband) to leave the room and have the day to herself to deal with the terrible news.

**Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities** - Jimmy Dugan is not taking control of the team so they do not have the roster for the game. Dottie Hinson is given control and is able to assign the team members their positions based on their ability levels. She does not put players in positions they would not do well in, because she knows her teammates well enough.

## ***Integrity***

**Know yourself and seek improvement** - Kit Keller is always being compared to her sister, Dottie Hinson, so she is constantly try to improve herself, so she can be a better leader.

**Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions** - Dottie Hinson takes over the team when Jimmy Dugan is too drunk and doesn't care enough to lead the team. She is able to do this successfully and fairly. When Jimmy Dugan doesn't agree with a play she stands her ground. Yet when the player follows Dugan's play and it is successful she gives him her respect.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0YyuppDBJw>

**Set the example** - When the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League is not getting as popular as originally thought, the girls are told to really "put on a good show." Dottie Hinson slides in to a split with a smile for the cameras, showing the girls exactly how to do this.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Identify a character that uses Respect in their leadership, another who uses Duty, and another who uses Integrity. How do they demonstrate it?
2. How do these characters use these values to their advantage?
3. Explain a moment in "*A League of Their Own*" when the principle of Respect is not used and causes conflict.
4. When would one of these principles help a character lead better and why?
5. How does being on a team change the way these values are used?

## DANIEL GOLEMAN'S SIX STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

### **Objective**

To introduce students to Goleman's Leadership Styles using characters from the film "*A League of Their Own*."

### **Commanding**

The commanding style is one in which the leader demands that his followers listen to him and cooperate with his instructions. The leader sets out goals and creates a drive to achieve them through his coerciveness. The leader does not expect nor want and doubt or second opinions from his subordinates. It works best in chaotic situations, or in situations in which the direction needs to be changed, or with subordinates that are problematic to the entire group.

### **Visionary**

A leader using the visionary style does so in a fashion that unites the subordinates toward one goal. It creates self-confidence and empathy in the subordinates because they feel a connection not only to the goal and the leader, but also to each other because they are each working together for the same thing. The leader is working with the subordinates and is not asking them to do something they are not, but rather asking them to do something WITH him. This works well when a new vision is needed or when a direction needs to be cleared up.

### **Affiliative**

When a leader uses the affiliative style of leadership, they create harmony in the group and build emotional bonds between the subordinates of the group. This leader puts their subordinates first, making sure that there is clear communication between the subordinates and that they are empathetic to the cause and each other. This works well when trying to heal divisions between subordinates and to motivate people during stressful situations.

### **Democratic**

A leader with a democratic leadership style cares about what the group as a whole thinks. This leader creates unity in the group through the participation of the group members. This style enables a team leadership to form through the collaboration of each of the members of the group. This allows the leader to get input from the group and it makes the group feel good about the leader and the cause because they had some kind of say in the matter.

### **Pacesetter**

A pacesetter style leader sets the bar really high for their subordinates. They create and develop a group of subordinates that have initiative, a drive, and are self-conscious. This style works well when something needs to be done quickly and usually only works well with a group of motivated and competent subordinates.

## **Coaching**

A leader utilizing the coaching style of leadership is not so much concerned with getting results immediately as they are with having people produce results in the future. They don't command people to do anything, but rather, they ask their subordinates to try something one way or a different way. This helps improve performances in the long-run and develops self-awareness and empathy among the subordinates.

## **General Discussion**

In beginning of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, Tom Hanks' character, Jimmy Dugan, was in a drunken stupor and did the exact bare minimum of what his boss told him to do as the manager for the Peaches: he showed up, smiled, and waved his hat at the crowd. This doesn't fit any of Goleman's leadership styles, because he wasn't being a leader at all. However, a few games into the series, Jimmy Dugan woke up and saw what was going on around him. He immediately started barking out orders to all the ladies on the team. He wakes up because Dottie Hinson, who had stepped up and assumed the role of coach while Jimmy had been passed out, was planning on having Marla Hooch bunt. Jimmy Dugan commanded, with the "Do-what-I-tell-you" fashion of the commanding style of leadership, that she, being the best hitter on the team, shouldn't be holding back and should be trying to actually hit the ball.

Even earlier, when Lou, the bus driver, quit after being blinded by Stilwell Gardner, the son of one of the players, Jimmy Dugan wakes from his stupor and realizes that the bus was stopped. Jimmy immediately takes charge and forces all the ladies to get back on the bus and he drives the bus himself. He takes charge without hesitation to take charge of the situation. Jimmy Dugan relies on this style of leadership because, as a baseball player, that is what he was conditioned with. He even mentions to Evelyn, in the famous "There is no crying in baseball!!!!!" scene (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6M8szlSa-8o&list=PL-RKcGbQ01zVAAIryUmTwScVX5K-Zm9Cv>), how his coach screamed at him and insulted him in a similar manner.

Baseball, at least in men's baseball, is set up in a way where the coach has a coercive and commanding leadership style, and that was how, and still is how, baseball works. So while Jimmy didn't necessarily purposely think it through that the style of leadership he was using would work well in his situation, it did. Goleman states that the commanding style works best "in a crisis" or "to kick start a turnaround." The lack of organization of the team constituted a crisis and, in order for the team to actually excel in the league, they needed something to reverse the direction the team was heading in. That's why Jimmy Dugan's commanding leadership style was so effective. Without it, the team wouldn't have had the driving force that Jimmy's coerciveness brought to the team. Before, the girls were fighting each other and arguing over petty things, not much was getting done and the Peaches were floundering at the games, but Jimmy Dugan introduced self-control to the team by controlling the team like an actual men's baseball team. He even handles Kit in a pace-setting fashion when he threw her in the shower after her fight on the field ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRLm\\_IVDSvo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRLm_IVDSvo)). He did not let the gender of the player's distract him from the fact that this was baseball, and it should be run like any other baseball team, coercively. There was a simple time, however, when he did show an affiliative style, such as the prayer in locker room

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmuJb30cigQ&list=PL-RKcGbQ01zVAAIryUmTwScVX5K-Zm9Cv>) and by becoming a personal friend of Dottie's.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Jimmy Dugan as a leader is discussed extensively above. Can you determine the leadership styles used for other characters in the film?
2. Which leadership style do you think you most prefer and why? Which do you least prefer and why?
3. What other examples can you think of where each style is appropriate?

## KOUZES AND POSNER'S FIVE PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP

### **Objective**

To introduce students to Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart, as well as to provide illustrative examples by discussing the following scenes from "*A League of Their Own*."

#### ***Model the Way***

Leaders should show how people should be treated and how goals should be met. They act as they want their followers to.

Although Jimmy Dugan does not come around to respecting the girls as baseball players initially, when he does, he treats them as he would treat fellow men as players. For example, when Kit Keller acts up and get in a fight with another player, he throws her in the showers and yells at her to cool down. Also, in the following clip, he yells at Evelyn Gardener, using the famous line "There's no crying in baseball!" Even though this can be seen as cruel, he is treating her as an equal. Jimmy Dugan treats them not just as novelties like the people who manage the league, but as baseball players, as they too should see themselves.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWoD2sQ9LiU>)

#### ***Inspire a Shared Vision***

Envision the future and create an image of what the group or organization can become.

When Dottie Hinson makes a stylish catch, it is caught in a picture and put on the front of Time magazine. This serves as an icon for the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League and encourages more fans to attend games, which in turn inspires the players.

#### ***Challenge the Process***

Leaders look for opportunities to change the status quo and look for innovative ways to improve the group or organization.

When Ernie Capadino takes the Dottie and Kit along to scout another girl, Marla Hooch, Ernie sees that she is less than attractive and turns her down. Dottie and Kit are disgusted by this, because Marla is such a talented player. They, as well as Marla's father convince him to take her on the team despite her looks. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0r5Mt4Qi7Y>)

### ***Enable Others to Act***

Leaders actively involve everyone and strive to strengthen others and make them their best.

Dottie is constantly looking out for her little sister, Kit's best interests, even if it displeases Kit. When Kit is getting tired on the mound, Dottie and Jimmy go and talk to her. Despite her pleas to the contrary, Dottie declares that Kit is done pitching. This is not only in Kit's best interest, but the team as well.

### ***Encourage the Heart***

Leaders appreciate the contribution of each member and show that they appreciate them.

When a delivery man comes to the clubhouse and reads a telegram about the recipient's husband has died, Jimmy Dugan practically grabs the telegram from the man's hand in order to find out whose husband died. He differs from his previous leadership style and shows some sensitivity and caring towards the girls because of the tragedy.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Can you think of scene not mention where a character uses one of the leadership practices?
2. What do you think were the predominate leadership practices in the film?
3. Were there moments in the film where it would have been ideal to use one of the above practices, but a character didn't? Explain.
4. Which practice or practices do use personally use the most and why?

## GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LEADERSHIP

### Objective

To discuss if and how gender affects leadership. Because of the time period's views on gender, as well as an abundance of women characters, "A League of Their Own" serves as a good starting point for discussion on this topic.

### Discussion Questions

1. Do men and women prefer different leadership styles? When Jimmy Dugan uses the leadership techniques that have been used on him as a man in baseball, he yells at Evelyn in the famous "There's no crying in baseball!" scene and she starts crying. However, later in the film when he uses gentler techniques, she says "Thank you." Do you think different leadership techniques should be used on different genders?
2. Do men and women prefer to lead differently? Dottie tends to show she cares about each individual member of the team while Jimmy barely knows their names at first. Do you think this difference is because of their gender or just because they like to lead differently.

## ADDITIONAL ARTICLES AND RESOURCES FOR "A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN"

*A League of Their Own* Leadership Analysis

(<http://communityrowingleadership.wordpress.com/2011/04/13/a-league-of-their-own-leadership-analysis/>)

Gender Differences and Leadership: A Study by Martha Kelley

(<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc/97-104.pdf>)

*Contributions from Drexel University students Gabrielle Getz and Claire Resnick; originally created December 2012.*