

The Dynamics of
Motivating

INSPIRING TEEN SPIRIT



A good coach can inspire teens, especially when the training is done within a group. **Paul Caminiti** founded Adrenaline Sports USA Inc. last year and trains kids 13-20 to improve speed, agility, core strength, endurance, flexibility and mental strength.



"I don't preach anything I don't do; I do the workouts with the kids," he says.

Training builds confidence, which builds motivation, Caminiti says. And group dynamics is a motivator in itself. "I've got kids motivating other kids, which is great," Caminiti said. "I'm a firm believer in the energy and dynamics that come out of the group. The group takes on a life of its own."

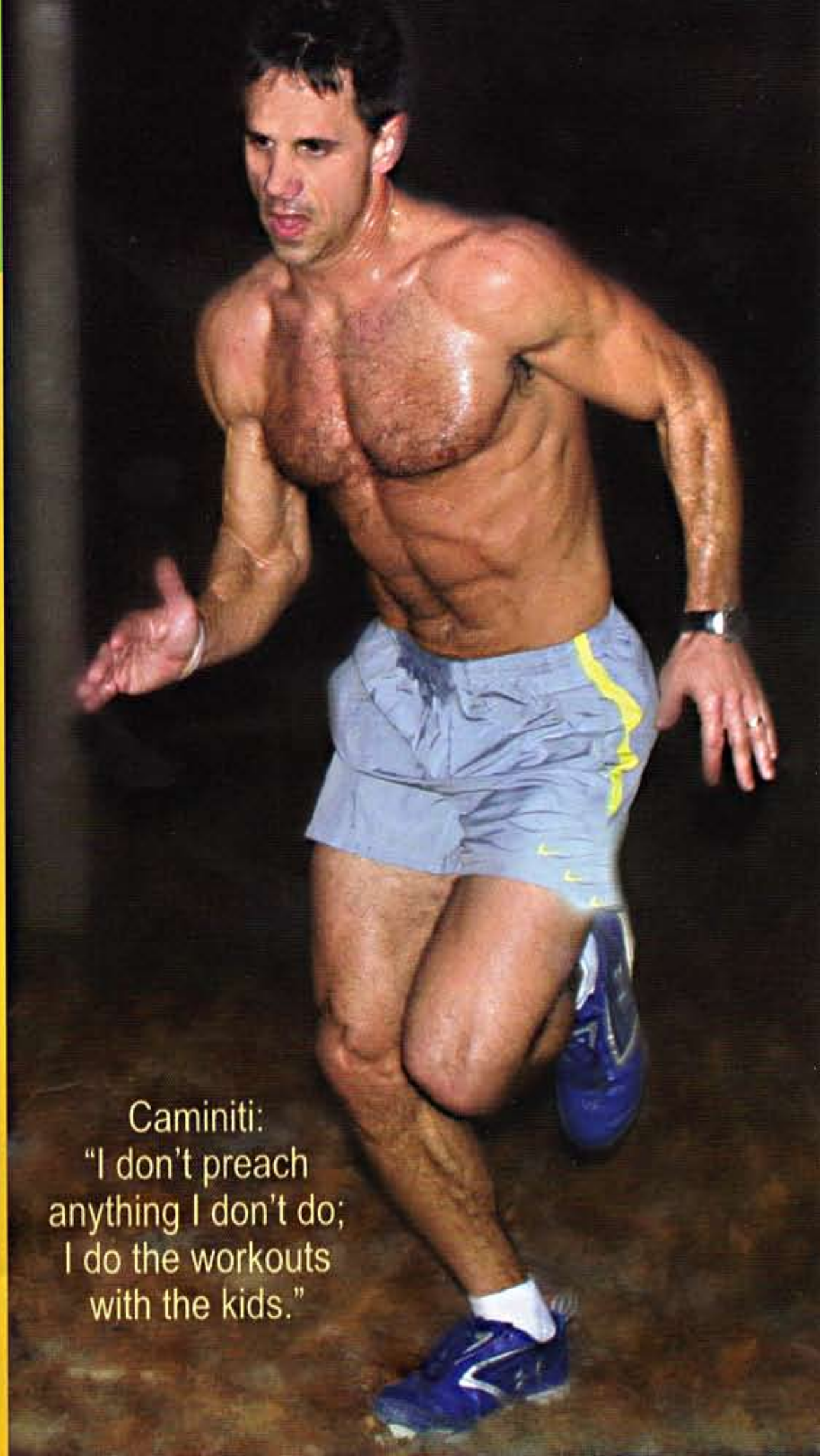
Alex Lynn, a 16-year-old Deep Run High School lacrosse player, wakes up before dawn several times a week to work out with Caminiti and some Deep Run wrestlers, then goes to school afterward. "By 8 o'clock I'm really awake," he says.

He admits it can be hard to

rise so early, but says the results are worth it. "I'm the same as anybody. When I wake up at 5 in the morning, I'd like to go back to sleep," he says. "But it's definitely a satisfying experience afterward." His advice to other teens: "Think to yourself, 'In an hour I'll be in a warm shower, and it'll be all over and I'll feel great.'"

Trainers are also available through YMCAs and fitness clubs. Look for coaches and trainers who work well with young people, give positive reinforcement and don't lecture.

"Kids want to go out there and play," Caminiti says. "They don't want to think too much. You have to engage them immediately—with energy and movement." **SBQ**



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Tips for Inspiring Your Teen

by Mary Ellin Arch

Is the call of the couch or the whisper of the Wii keeping your teen from living an active lifestyle? People who work with teens and young adults say parents can do a lot to help their teens add activity to their routine and keep them motivated to continue. Here are some of their suggestions.

Join a neighborhood athletic association. Many associations affiliated with elementary schools serve teens, too. For example, about half of the approximately 500 children served by Gordon Athletic Association in Chesterfield County are middle or high school students, said GAA President Randall Carson. GAA's baseball and softball programs serve children up to age 18, and cheerleading, football and basketball accepts participants through age 14. Look for an association that stresses participation and skill-building, and puts less emphasis on winning. "Encourage kids to participate whenever possible, and try to remove the competitive aspect of it," Carson said. "Everyone can enjoy participating if the pressure to win is not there."

Get friends involved. One benefit of joining a neighborhood athletic association is that your child will be playing with neighborhood friends or classmates. Peer relationships are vital to teens; they'll be more likely to be active if their friends are also involved, said Jason Christiansen, teen director at the Midlothian YMCA. Christiansen said he knows a mom who drives her son and his friends to the Y to play football on its field. Parents can encourage their teens to invite friends to shoot hoops, or offer to drive them to a park to make use of courts, fields and trails.

Consider camp. Sending your teen to summer camp is a good way to sneak in some physical activity, especially if your child isn't athletic or active to start with. Most camp programs include some physical activity such as swimming or hiking, Christiansen said. And camps offer the same group dynamics and opportunities for friendship and positive peer reinforcement as team sports and group training. Other teen programs also incorporate physical activity. Teens in the Midloth-

ian Y's leaders club, for example, are expected to perform sit-ups and push-ups, Christiansen said.

Help your child find an activity that fits. Maybe you've tried team sports, but your child didn't like it. Help him or her find a better fit. Christiansen tells of one child who liked to swim but hated hearing the swim coach shout instructions as he did his laps. "The boy was encouraged to try diving—and liked it and stuck with it," Christiansen said, "because the sport requires a different coaching style."

Set a good example. Reluctant teens may need a little more prodding. "If kids don't want to get outside," Christiansen said, "a parent may need to say, 'Hey, come take a walk with me.' Providing an example is another key component."

Stress healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle. Coaches and trainers agree that physical activity isn't enough. "How many kids get home from school and eat a meal, and then three hours later they eat another meal?" Christiansen said. Teach your child about appropriate snacks and how healthy eating contributes to a healthy lifestyle that includes physical activity. **SBQ**