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Packers Head Coach Matt LaFleur and Eric Borgerding Talk Leadership, Resilience at WHA's Advocacy Day

WHA's 2025 Advocacy Day, held April 9, featured a memorable fireside chat between Green Bay Packers Head Coach Matt LaFleur and WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding. Their conversation, generously sponsored by CG Schmidt, touched on leadership, team culture, and resilience—offering parallels between professional sports and health care.



LaFleur emphasized the value of high-character individuals and the impact of culture on performance. "When you hire the right people and get the right people in the building, it gives you a chance to withstand tough times and achieve greatness," he said, drawing a connection to the high-pressure, high-stakes nature of both football and health care.

LaFleur shared his approach to adapting roles to fit the strengths of team members, rather than fitting individuals into predefined roles. He provided examples from his coaching experience, illustrating the need for flexibility based on the available players and their unique abilities. "You better adapt or you're going to die," he said, underscoring the importance of flexibility—on the field and in the hospital.

The conversation delved into the significance of resilience and handling adversity. LaFleur discussed the importance of maintaining composure and focusing on what can be controlled. He shared personal anecdotes about instilling resilience in his children and the lessons learned from challenging situations. Borgerding highlighted the relevance of resilience by quoting LaFleur's mentor, NFL legend Mike Shanahan: "Tough times don't last, tough people do." Borgerding drew parallels between the challenges faced in professional sports and those encountered in health care, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reflecting on his career growth, LaFleur emphasized the importance of succession planning in developing future leaders. He spoke about the satisfaction of seeing coaches he has mentored succeed and move on to higher positions. "We're trying to develop leaders, great coaches, great teachers and great mentors for our players," LaFleur said, underscoring the importance of nurturing talent within the organization.



The Advocacy Day 2025 crowd watches the keynote discussion with Matt LaFleur.

The fireside chat with Coach LaFleur was a highlight of WHA's Advocacy Day, offering attendees a unique perspective on leadership, team culture and resilience. His insights and experiences provided valuable lessons that are applicable not only in professional sports, but also in the health care industry.

