

## Fueling the Mind for Peak Performance

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The mental preparation of an athlete can be the difference between winning and losing. While winning should not be the only goal, it does play a part in a coach's job. In addition to making their players better athletes, coaches have the job of making players better people. Good people will be mentally tougher and have a will to win in the fourth quarter. Knowing and using the following tactics can help a coach develop a winning program on all levels.

### Define the program

Create a mission statement to help define the team. Every team member, including players, coaches and other staff members, should be held accountable to this statement. A team is not made up of individuals. It is defined by its individuals.

### Teach accountability

Each athlete's actions on and off the field affects the athlete, the athlete's family and the team. Teach players to stop and think. Have the athletes ask themselves the following questions:

- ✓ Is this a risk I can afford to take?
- ✓ How will this affect my future?
- ✓ How will this affect my family?
- ✓ How will this affect my teammates and coaches?

### Get every coach on the same page

The coaching staff sets the tone of the team. They must make the same sacrifices as the athletes, set an example, keep a positive attitude and never stop teaching. Athletes act as the coaches act.

### Motivate athletes to believe in themselves

If athletes believe in themselves, they will accomplish more on and off the field. Whether it's themselves, their team, their school, their coaches or their visions, believing can take athletes as far as they want to go.

### Preach those two favorite four-letter words – HARD WORK

Winning games is hard enough, but champions win games in the 4th quarter! There is no easy formula for this. The team must outwork the opponent to gain the winning edge. Hard work does pay off in the end.

### Change is uncontrollable and positive

A coach or an athlete may have had success in the past using particular tactics. However, those tactics may not work at every level. Don't be afraid to make adjustments to reach that next level of success. A solid program should continue to evolve as teams and players grow.

### Take time away from the game

Sometimes coaches and athletes need to forget about the sport. This does not mean quitting the sport. It means taking time away to talk with the team or coaches about life. Sharing life's lessons with one another can make the team stronger as a unit and each athlete a stronger person.

### Remember this formula for success

- ✓ Practice and concentration, then more practice and concentration!
- ✓ Those who let things happen usually lose to those who make things happen.
- ✓ If you don't invest much in the process, then defeat doesn't hurt and winning isn't very exciting!