

Producing Winning Athletes

Ready:

?For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.? - 1 Timothy 4:8 (NIV)

Set

In my first year as a football coach, I was unsure of what to expect. But I went into the season with one goal: being satisfied not with producing a winning record, but with producing winning athletes. Billy Graham once stated that one coach would influence more people in one year than the average person would in a lifetime. This was an idea I took to heart.

At the beginning of the season, I had no idea who my players were or what their backgrounds were like, but I did know one thing: while they were on my team they were going to learn not only about football, but about life and God. We suffered our first loss of the season in just our second game. It was our first game at home, and it was against our rival. The defeat was a big "slap in the face" for our team.

But from that loss, our team learned to lean on each other to get through tough times. We bonded together under the idea that nothing was impossible if we did the following three things:

1. Think that we are talented, athletic, smart, victorious, etc.
2. Believe in our hearts that God would be with us and help us.
3. Give 100 percent of our efforts in everything we did.

Think, believe, do. When we do these three things, nothing is impossible. After that loss, we went on to win eight straight games and win the championship with a record of 9-1. Our offense averaged 15.4 points per game and our defense only surrendered 5.2 points per game. These were impressive stats, and in today's society, it is how our team and our coaching staff will be judged.

However, it was not how I or my team determined success. As a coach, my goal had been to develop winning athletes, not just a winning record. By that standard, did we experience success? I can honestly answer that question with an overwhelming yes! I know for a fact that, because of the grace of God, these boys became better people during the season. They learned valuable life lessons about fear, anger, disagreements, perseverance, humbleness, respect and so much more.

In a few years' time, the championship won't mean much to these kids or their parents. However, the lessons they learned about life and God will stay with them forever. In sports,

this is how we should measure success. It's so much more than about what appears on the scoreboard. When we make a difference in the lives around us and we grow together in spiritual maturity, we experience true success by God's definition.

As a personal encouragement to coaches, I want to remind you that we are not there to be served by our athletes for personal gain. We are there to serve them and help them draw closer to Christ. Fight the temptation to find value in the performance of your team and learn to embrace the opportunity to help them grow both athletically and spiritually.

Go

1. How are you measuring your success as a player or coach? Is it measured by worldly things or godly things?
2. As a coach or an athlete, how are you serving the players on your team?
3. Since the beginning of your season, has your team drawn closer to the Lord? In what ways?

Workout

- Romans 12
- 2 Timothy 2:5

Bible Reference:

2 Timothy 2



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