

Frustration

What is it that most frustrates you when you compete? Is it when you fail to accomplish what you had expected? Is it when your teammates fail to hold up their end of the competition? Maybe it's when your expectations exceed your abilities? It's easy for people to say; "Don't be frustrated," but we who play our hearts out don't find that so easy.

In my life of competition, I have found that my frustration is normally found in the situations where my expectations don't match the results realized. For years I expected our football team to win championships, but we were mired in mediocrity. We finished 1 and 10 a couple of times. We were 3 and 8 several times and 5 and 6 twice before breaking through into success. I was constantly frustrated in those early years as my expectations were consistently unmet.

This frustration left me with a set of hard decisions to make. Should I continue in the same way and endure constant frustration? Should I lower my expectations and feel the internal betrayal I would have perceived toward our players and coaches? Should I find some other way to deal with this pain gnawing at my soul?

This process was neither easy nor quick. My commitment to the team would not allow me to expect any less from them than I ever had. I decided to take a lesson from them and to adopt their approach to goal setting. Rather than hanging all my expectations (and attitude) on the ultimate result (final record), I went with them in setting a number of goals which built toward an ultimate goal – a championship.

This approach allowed me to find joy and satisfaction in the incremental achievements which continually progressed toward the season's summation. I could rejoice in each game's successes and still feel the sting of each one's failures. I found I could walk with them through the season fully engaged in each game, win or lose, with equal passion and commitment.

As you prepare to play your heart out this season, give some time to setting incremental goals which each one build toward the apex of being a champion.

Allow the daily successes and failures to shape you into the competitor, coach or team which you have envisioned. Such planning and goal setting shapes one's expectations and can keep the paralyzing effects of frustration at bay.

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