

Toxic Asset

Ready:

“When pride comes, disgrace follows, but with humility comes wisdom.” - Proverbs 11:2

Set

Assets are things you possess. Normally considered to be good things, assets can be either tangible (cars, houses, phones) or intangible (leadership, athletic ability, wisdom). When used with a positive, serving attitude, your intangible assets can be infectious and influence those around you. However, when used negatively or for personal gain, your assets can be poisonous.

When the home lending market collapsed in 2008-2009, those in the industry came up with the term “toxic asset,” which referred to any asset that went from carrying significant value (home mortgage) to actually becoming a threat to the holder due to its dramatically fallen value. Since then, the term has been used in situations outside the financial field, including the world of sports. Whether we are athletes, coaches or fans, we all know of a player who became a “toxic asset” to his or her team at some point during a season. And for those around them, it became imperative to deal effectively with the toxic asset before he or she negatively impacted not only every member of the team, but also the greater purpose of the team as a whole.

Now more than ever we are witnessing professional teams deal quickly with their locker rooms’ toxic assets. In a realm where winning is the only measurable goal, owners, general managers and coaches had often been slow to remove star athletes from their rosters for several reasons. One, because these players brought serious talent and trading or removing them left voids that were difficult to fill. And two, they didn’t want another team to pick up their superstar and use him or her to beat their team in the future. But here is where wisdom has finally prevailed. Many of the professional sports decision-makers have realized that these toxic assets aren’t worth the trouble. They’ve become the game-changers they hoped they’d be, but in a very negative way, changing every training session, every conversation, every play and every game in a manner so grievous that the entire organization is paralyzed. The higher-ups are more and more seeing swift, corrective action as the only acceptable option to keep the team from imploding.

With the toxic asset phenomenon becoming more prevalent in college, high school and youth sports, we have to be of the same mind knowing that it's better to deal with the problem than let it have a devastating effect on the teams around them. As Christians, developing Christ-like character always should outweigh winning, and if we compromise in this area, we will ignore the reason for which God has put us on the team or at its helm to begin with: to make disciples of Him.

In any sporting event our goal is to win, but it cannot be the singular purpose for which we play and coach. To succeed in the eyes of Christ, the pillars of integrity, serving, teamwork and excellence must receive higher priority than winning, and all of the toxic assets in our path must be addressed with His love.

Go

1. As a coach, am I helping my star athletes become “toxic assets” by ignoring inappropriate behavior, or do I hold the entire team to the same standard of behavior? What are the results of my actions?
2. As a player, do I face my challengers with the face of Christ, or do I constantly boast in my own strength and abilities? Do I compete for the pleasure of my Heavenly Father or for the applause of men? Do I respect my coaches, teammates and officials, or do I question every decision or call that does not go my way? If unchecked, which of my assets could become toxic?
3. How can players of Christ-like attitudes help coaches deal with toxic assets on a team?

Workout

- Psalm 10:4
- Proverbs 16:18-19
- Galatians 5:7-9
- 1 Peter 5:5-6

Bible Reference:

Proverbs 11:2

Psalms 10:4

Proverbs 16:18-19

Galatians 5:7-9

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