



Champion Coach Note: Strive for your Personal Best

Legendary UCLA Basketball coach John Wooden said, "Never try to be better than someone else. Learn from others, and try to be the best you can be. Success is the by-product of that preparation." Ultimately, success is found by working to become the best version of yourself, *not* by comparing yourself to others and trying to live up to their standards.

As a coach, explain to your players that mastery, or achieving your personal best, means doing everything within your power to become better as an athlete and an individual. Doing your personal best isn't about ability or performance relative to others. Rather, it is about individual attitude and effort. It means failing often. It means making adjustments. It means training hard every day to track your progress because of a desire and a commitment to be *better*. Doing your personal best is self-referencing; it is pointless, and ultimately restrictive, to compare yourself with others.

When an athlete plays with his heart and gives every ounce of effort, he has done his personal best. When an athlete tirelessly works to improve, she has achieved her personal best. When an athlete sacrifices for his team, he has achieved his personal best. When an athlete uses her God-given gifts in a positive way, she has achieved her personal best.

Encourage your athletes to set standards for themselves, to keep track of individual



**Play Like A Champion Partner
Oratory Preparatory High School,
Summit, New Jersey**

**"Doing your best
means never stop trying."**

~ Helen Keller

performances, and to benchmark their subsequent performances against a personal best: *I'll run for two more minutes than my previous long. I'll juggle the soccer ball 100 times instead of 90. I'll do five more push-ups than last time. I won't leave the gym until I've made 10 shots in a row.* Your athletes need to hold themselves accountable. Personal challenges encourage personal improvement and eventual mastery.

Clearly outline your expectations for your team and communicate to them what giving your personal best looks like. Explain how giving your personal best will be different for every member of the team, but remind them that each player needs to hold himself accountable. Highlight the importance of having a good work ethic, a positive attitude, and a commitment to the team and its goals. Identify some unrealistic expectations or standards that may follow your team and place pressure on your athletes. Stress to your athletes that they need to work to improve themselves and not to worry about the performances or expectations of others.

A short film by Houston Rockets basketball star, Jeremy Lin, reinforces this idea. He tells a young, aspiring basketball player, "You're young and you're going to keep growing. Just remember to keep getting better every day." Remind your athletes that success isn't found in wins or by meeting the expectations of others. Rather, it is found by tirelessly preparing and giving your personal best every day!