



Preparation and Perspiration: Hard Work is the Key to Success

Former English soccer player, Michael Owen, said, "If you only ever give 90% in training then you will only ever give 90% when it matters." As a coach, help your team understand what hard work looks like – a commitment to giving your personal best at every practice and at every game. It holds true that athletes play the way they practice – performance in training, away from the spotlight, translates to performance when it counts.

Remind your players that often, hard work and proper preparation beat undisciplined talent (Tim Notke). The book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Carol Dwek provides important insight to coaches. Dwek's research reveals that when we praise people for their innate physical ability in sport, a young person's development is not as encouraged (and might even be stunted) as when young people are praised for the effort and hard work they put into preparing for competition.

Explain to your athletes that hard work isn't settling for what is easy. It is a focused commitment to constantly work to improve, even when you're tired; even when you're upset; even if you've temporarily lost the desire to train or compete. Challenge your athletes to put their hearts and souls into training and to take no shortcuts.

Stress that hard work begins with character. Ask your athletes what kind of people they want to be and help them connect that their work ethic reflects who they are as individuals.



"Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard."

~ Tim Notke

"It's supposed to be hard. If it wasn't hard, everyone would do it. The hard is what makes it great."

~ [Tom Hanks A League of Their Own](#)
(Click to watch the quote delivered)

It's not too late to sign-up to attend today's FREE "Building Peace on Earth Through Sportsmanship" Webinarsponsored by Play Like A Champion Today and The Great Sportsmanship Programme at Noon EST. Email us at <mailto:plc@nd.edu?subject=webinar%20registration> and we will send you the log-in information.

Athlete Reflection

Have your athletes watch this [clip with Kevin Durant](#) and reflect on the following questions:

1. When I train, do I always put forth by best effort?
2. Do I challenge myself to work hard outside of practice and during the off season?

Also encourage diligence – one of the seven heavenly virtues – from your athletes: a commitment to a strong work ethic, persistence, and motivation toward a goal. Effort isn't measurable – only each individual athlete knows his or her potential.

However, coaches can encourage athletes to hold one another accountable and to let their individual efforts and hard work encourage others to do the same.

Make it clear to your athletes that they put themselves and their team in the best position to succeed if they work hard. Remember, as Dr. T.P. Chia said, "Hard work does not necessarily guarantee success, but no success is possible without hard work." This week, stress the importance of hard work to your athletes as a key component of becoming a Champion!

3. Why should I work hard?

4. Do I challenge my teammates to work hard? Do I set a good example with my own work ethic?

Advent Reflection

Advent is a Season of Preparation. Just as our athletes prepare diligently for their games and competition, so must we all prepare ourselves spiritually for the birth of Jesus in our hearts and in our lives in the Christmas season.

Coaches, if you are interested in reflecting upon the meaning of Advent in our lives, follow the [Notre Dame Advent Reflection Series](#).