

OVERCOMING ANXIETY/FEAR OF FAILURE

Your ability to challenge yourself and perform well by rising above anxiety and fear.

WHAT WILL YOUR COACHING CHALLENGE BE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS?

LOW

Athletes at low levels will:

- Worry to the point where it hurts their performance.
- Have a hard time taking risks or visualizing their success.
- Have low expectations of themselves or others.
- Are more focused on individual performance & provide little support to others.

HIGH

Athletes at high levels will:

- Regularly engage in positive thinking about performance.
- Make a habit of seeing themselves playing great and winning.
- Set high standards for themselves and for others.
- Offer encouragement & support to others as they try to get better.

HOW CAN YOU MOVE YOUR ATHLETES TO HIGH LEVELS?

Coaching Tips

- **Incorporate Visualization in Team Practice:**
 - ✓ Have athletes engage in visual imagery to walk themselves through every step of their performance. Work as a team to perfect visualization skills.
 - ✓ Praise and reinforce when athletes can channel their negative emotions into positive performance actions.
 - ✓ Encourage athletes to be fearless and take a chance on learning new techniques or skills. Have them practice visualization in different situations and settings so they become comfortable with the mental tool.
- **Beware of Mind Traps:**
 - ✓ Be aware of black and white thinking or language that promotes “always” or “never” type of thoughts. Help athletes to see the grey areas when needed.
 - ✓ Encourage athletes to believe in themselves and their teammates.
 - ✓ If athletes have a bad game or practice, encourage them to shake it off and look to the next play or practice.
- **Control Emotions:**
 - ✓ Encourage athletes to practice mindfulness to stay in the present moment rather than thinking about the past or focusing too much on the future.
 - ✓ Create motivating statements or slogans (e.g., “Be more, do more” or “Stronger together!” or “Believe it, achieve it!”) as a team to help overcome obstacles.

Talking Points

- Discuss how anxiety and fear are normal for everyone, but the best have strategies to overcome their fears.
- Discuss how negative thinking can impact performance negatively. If you have a negative mindset, your performance and teamwork will be negatively impacted.
- Discuss how each athlete can reframe their failures as an opportunity to learn. For example, discuss what they are thinking when they down in a game. Discuss that they need to forget the score and focus on the next play.
- Talk about the importance of creating a mental memory of their skills and how it is just as important as physically practicing. Ask them if they actively practice visualizing their performance in both positive and negative situations.

Tools

- APP Lessons: Choose to Be Positive
- CORE Elements: Mental Toughness, Composure
- PRESSURE Elements: Short Fuse, Self-Doubting, Stubborn, Impatient, Perfectionistic

“Worrying is like a rocking chair, it gives you something to do, but it gets you nowhere.”

– Glenn Turner, New Zealand Cricket Great –