

Questions that Student-Athletes Need to Ask Themselves!

Some teams seem to have that extra something that always seem to contribute to their being successful more times than not! This year's Super Bowl winners is a primary example of what I'm talking about! For lack of a better term it is called, "Togetherness! They are all on the same page in terms of their goals and aspirations". This is an easily stated observation, but what does it mean? Asking yourself some of these questions may shed some light or reasoning on my statement regarding these kinds of Team's Successes!

So I ask you:

1. Why do you play the sport or game?
2. What is your greatest gain for you personally from your participation in your sport?
3. What is your greatest gain from actually playing the game?
4. How hard on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the greatest physical effort, do you work?
5. Would every teammate agree with you in your personal evaluation of your effort? Why not?
6. Do you know how to make good decisions on and off the court? What goes into a decision?
7. What are you most proud of in your athletic endeavors?
8. Do you find that you are a leader? What causes you to think as you do!
9. Do you find yourself a Reactionary or a Pro-active player? Are you calling the shots!
10. Do you exhibit enthusiasm for playing? For your teammates as well?
11. Do you demonstrate a constant Caring and Respect for the welfare of your teammates?
11. What is more important to you of the following questions?
 - Is winning more important to me than how much I play!
 - Is being accepted by my teammates more important than playing time!
 - Is playing time more important to me than how I feel about my teammates!
 - Is my personal achievement more important to me than the Team's?
12. Are you enjoying your current Athletic experience most of the time? If not 100%, why?
13. Are you learning how to deal with Adversity and even personal struggles and remaining in control through tough times?
14. Who would you ask first to help you with any struggle you experience?

If membership into an organization or team doesn't make you feel accepted, what does?

Is it playing time?

Is it being socially included at all times?

Is it interest in you as a person from other teammates, aside from being an athlete?

Is it having your coaches give you, "the time of day?"

Do you need to have your coaches and teammates talk to you off the field or court?

Do you feel respect from the rest of the institution, or are you looked at as a non-contributing student by academia?

Do you feel that your skills in your sport do not make you feel like a true contributor?

What are you thinking about after these questions that you have asked yourself?

What is your Responsibility as a Student - Athlete?

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What are you Responsible for as an Athlete?

When I read the statement by Maurice Claret , Ohio State's primer running back a few years ago after he found himself in all kinds of trouble with the law and authorities at OSU, **that he had no idea how he was supposed to act as an 18 year old athlete,** I was disheartened and in disbelief at the same time! How long does it take a anyone from a child to an adult to learn the difference between **what is right and what is wrong?** When does one come to understand differences in the standards of behavior that society accepts and those actions that raise everyone's eyebrows?

I truly believe that it happens long before someone's 18th birthday but something else takes over, especially in gifted Athletes, and puts a blinder on individuals who come to think that their actions are totally without consequences as long as they can perform exceptional acts on the playing fields or fail to care about anyone's else's feelings but their own!

Their physical prowess and adoring fan base, have developed an unjustifiable view of themselves that says, people love how I perform athletically so they will readily accept my behavior whether or not it conforms to conventional ways! This false sense carries with it an attitude of entitlement and a false sense of self-worth. It also carries with it a time bomb and the sooner than later the reality of being hit with a self – destructive episode when their unacceptable mannerism and actions become intolerable to those around him or her!

So why is it that we continually read about these exceptional Athletes who are destined for or already have reached a level of greatness, yet their lives become embroiled in socially unacceptable activities that cost them everything they have worked to achieve? Is this a question that Athletic Administrators and Coaches are not spending time on teaching their athletes from the youth levels right on up to the professional ranks, on their.....

Responsibilities as an Athlete

..... and the expectations that we are hoping to see clearly demonstrated? I see and read about such examples every week, and only a well thought plan of an educational agenda will begin to address this situation that appears to becoming more and more prevalent on today's fields of play! The most unfortunate reality of this prevalence is identifiable even on our youth, high school, and college ranks, not just in professional sports!

We need to begin by identifying the **Responsibilities that every Athlete must learn** to accept from the day he/she begins their athletic participation.

Ten simple things you must know and understand!

1. An Athlete must first accept that all **sport is governed by a set of rules and standards** and that these standards must be unquestionable while playing the game.
2. Along with Standards of the sport, **comes a standard of behavior** that exemplifies all that is good in society and with it the expectation that adherence is part of having **the privilege**

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of participation, and it is not the Athlete's right. These standards need to be practiced on the Team, in the school and community

3. In a team sport, ***the uniform means just that***, each individual is the same and will act in a uniformly fashion to allow everyone's individual contribution, make the whole, successful
4. It means that you must daily ***demonstrate a Caring and Respectful attitude to your Teammates*** and Coaches at all times. You will treat each other with kindness that demonstrates your belief in everyone's human dignity! The same goes for your opponents and officials.
5. You are responsible for ***having Empathy for one another*** and coming to the aid of every teammate in time of need!
6. You are responsible ***for all of these actions on and off the fields of play***, in your classrooms, in your homes and in your community!
7. You are ***responsible for your own Actions*** and if they carry a negative consequence, then you step up and accept whatever hand you are dealt.
8. You are responsible ***for making good decisions*** by caring about what you want to Achieve, who it will Affect, what are the Alternatives , and what could go Awry.(wrong)
9. You are responsible ***for your Attitude*** which should be positive, having a ***Strong work Ethic, and taking the Initiative*** to do what needs to be done without being told!
10. You are Responsible for being ***Appreciative for having the opportunity to play*** a sport you enjoy! It doesn't take much to say Thank you to those who make it happen for you!

These simple rules for your behavior are well within the range of understanding for all Athletes, young and old, and they need to be practiced until they are your standards for everyday behavior. They are not to be compromised unless you want to face the consequences! All the above should serve as your constant behavioral model but daily you need to keep in mind simple responsibilities like:

1. Do I get the appropriate amount of **rest** every day!
2. Do I eat **nutritiously** to fuel your body for optimum performance!
3. Do I arrive on **time** for every obligation!
4. Do I **attend** every class and **participate** while paying close **attention**!
5. Do I always complete **my homework** and turn it in on time!
6. Do I **acknowledge** your teachers and coaches, they are here for you! Appreciate it!
7. Do I dress **appropriate** for school, don't look like a bum or tramp!
8. Do I watch my **language** and what I say!

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9. Do I treat everyone **with respect!** Mistreating others is an act of being a Bully!
10. Do I have the **Courage to act correctly** when others around me are not!

You must be aware of what your actions say about your character and who you really are! Demonstrate caring and kindness every day!

It is the little things that differentiate good teams from those who fail to reach their real potential and individually fail to be introspective and understand why! All Athletes have the power to determine their thinking and actions! RAF

Attitude Inventory

From the Josephson Institute for Character

In the geometry of life, the axiom is “**positive attitudes produce positive results.**” They make success more likely, failures less harmful, pleasures more frequent, and pain more bearable. Some people tend to bring warm sunshine wherever they go; others bring cold chills. **What do you bring?**

To find out where you can improve, take an inventory of your predispositions, the attitude you’re most likely to start with:

- Are you generally optimistic or pessimistic?
- Do you tend to assume the best or expect the worst of people?
- Is your first instinct to be empathetic or judgmental?
- Is your first instinct to be supportive or critical?
- Do you send the message that you enjoy life or that you’re barely enduring it?
- Do you come across as the captain of your own ship or simply a passenger?

Wherever you are on the positive-attitude spectrum, think how much better things could be if you were more consistently and self-consciously optimistic, empathetic, supportive, grateful, enthusiastic, hopeful, and cheerful.

So why not resolve to think, act, and speak more positively about yourself, your family, your teammates, and everyone else in your life?

You are in control of your attitude and how you face all experiences!

Character counts.

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Teamwork: My 10 Essential Elements

Team Defined: A group that acts collectively with input from everyone while sacrificing individual accomplishments for the good of the entire body.

Teamwork Defined: is the process where a group of individuals act collectively to achieve an agreed upon Goal by carrying out their individual responsibility and contributing unselfishly towards the desired outcome!

There are some essential elements that must be present for the effective Teamwork to be successful and they are:

1. Every player must understand and Know their role
2. Every player must Accept responsibility for their role and its execution
3. Every player must Sacrifice individual gain for the good of the whole
4. Every player must Be part of the solution to overcome any obstacles
5. Every player must Practice good decision making skills until they become habit: What are the desired outcomes, Any Alternatives, who does it affect, what can happen or go wrong?
6. Every player must Trust their Teammates and Coaches
7. Every player must Accept constructive criticism without feeling persecuted
8. Every player needs to Be persistent attempting to make the whole better
9. Every player must Demonstrate Respect and Caring for everyone at all times
10. Having and displaying a Positive Attitude is a Must

All great Teams experience a multitude of peaks and valleys not only in Competition but also in the daily preparation and execution of the work at hand. How they handle these fluctuations and are able to fall back on the **Essentials of Teamwork** is likely the key ingredient that makes them excel in the long run and prevents any continuous setback to their desired Goals! (RAF)

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Education is Synonymous with Change

