



A COACH'S INFLUENCE

AAO BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A BETTER TEAM AND LIFE

SELF CONTROL

"Self-control is the ability to discipline ourselves and keep our emotions under control,"

Coach John Wooden

If a player or coach wants to reach his/her full potential they must be able to exercise self-control. No matter the task, physical or mental, if our emotions take over, we will not execute to our personal level of competency because our judgment and decision making capacities are impaired. When our emotions dominate our actions, we make mistakes.

When a player demonstrates a lack of self-control, his individual achievement will be hindered and therefore, jeopardize the team's accomplishments. Emotions are a God-given part of our design and DNA structure. They are very useful and help us to experience the full scope of life and sport. Emotions are a big part of athletic competition. But emotions, not under control and discipline, can become deceptive and destructive.

As coaches we must teach and train our players to channel their emotions. When our players feel intense emotions of excitement, anxiety or frustration, they must learn to direct those emotions into a greater focus and concentration on the task at hand. Most players allow their focus to remain on their most recent failure or injustice— missed shots, turnovers, fouls, missed assignments, missed calls by an official, etc. Intentionally help your players to quickly take their mental focus off the past play (good or bad) and get it on the immediate task at hand.

One of the things we can do to help temper the emotional roller coaster that many of our young athletes experience, is to not allow players to excessively celebrate the good during a game or pitch emotional fits and tantrums out of frustration or discouragement from the bad suffered. You set the example - players often reflect the emotional makeup of their coach. Remember when emotions dominate, judgment is clouded and mistakes happen. During competition, train your players to respond to the team's successes and failures with self control, by concentrating intensely on the moment.

One of the great signs of maturity is the ability to control emotions and perform at a high level when those around us are losing control. Many people live a life of regret because of emotional outbursts that they lacked the discipline to control. We have a great "training ground" in sports to teach young people the vital character trait of self-discipline that will serve them well in all aspects of life.

"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize..." Philipians 3:13-14