

Mental Toughness is Important for Athletes

The concept of understanding mental toughness is evasive for many. It is a hard concept to explain; however, it is obvious when you see a player that has it.

Being mentally tough is having the psychological edge that allows one to perform at peak maximum effort and efficiency during the demands that are placed on them during training, practice or competition. Specifically, when the demands are greatest or the conditions become adverse.

Whenever the demands are the greatest is when the characteristics of mental triumph are most evident. Some of the many characteristics that are evident include:

- Self confidence
- Self-motivation
- Focus
- Concentration
- Composure
- Calmness
- Poise
- Self-Control
- Positive Energy
- Determination
- Persistence
- Leadership

This doesn't mean that the outcome is always a win. In many cases, these attributes can show up the most during a loss or during adverse conditions. But over time and with careful training the mental toughness of skilled players comes to light in championship games.

To have mental toughness one must practice attributes that lead to mental toughness. It takes time and patience under the right leadership to develop mental toughness. Parents, educators, coaches and other mentors must be systematically involved in the training process.

Also, it take failure and the ability to bounce back. Many people develop mental toughness through the experience of failure. Good parents do not want their children to fail. But today, too many blame others for the failure. Parents are quick to blame the teacher for problems in class or the coach when the child is not excelling in baseball or softball. Mental toughness cannot be developed properly when you blame others.

Here are some examples of those that worked through failure to develop mental toughness and succeed:

*"Every strikeout got me closer to my next homerun." **BABE RUTH** (Babe Ruth grew up in an orphanage. During his playing career, he struck out a record 1,330 times on his way to hitting 714 career homeruns.)*

*"...Failure makes me try harder the next time." **MICHAEL JORDAN***