

Player Burnout/Dropout

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What Is Burnout?

- “emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment” (Maslach and Jackson, 1984)
- Translation to youth sport
- Psychological, emotional, and physical withdrawal (Smith, 1986)
- ***WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?***



Dropout vs. Burnout

Burnout Includes:

- 1) Emotional Exhaustion
- 2) Negative Responses to Others
- 3) Low Self-Esteem



Why do Children Play Sports?

■ BOYS

- To have fun
- To do something I am good at
- To improve skills

■ GIRLS

- To have fun
- To stay in shape
- To get exercise



Why do Children Dropout?

- Want to do other activities
- Talent
- It is not fun
- Dislike the coach



Is This Really A Problem?

- 70%-75% of all youth sport players quit by age 13
- Of the 16 players on your U12 team, only 4 will play at the U14 level



Causes for Burnout

- Social/Interpersonal
 - Negative Parental Influence, Team Culture (coaching), Competition for Attention, Personal Problems
- Psychological
 - Lack of Enjoyment and Unfulfilled Expectations
- Physical
 - **OVERTRAINING**, Injury, Persistent Fatigue



Different Coaching Stressors

- Too much emphasis on winning
 - No playing time
 - Substitute after a mistake
 - Not talking to team after a loss
 - Relating performance to self-worth
 - Making “friendship” conditional on performance
- Playing Favorites



Parental Difficulties

- Parents living through children vicariously
- Lack of the 'Emotional Moat'
- Sideline yelling
- Parents comparing own children to others



Perspectives of Some Parents

- “I’m making sure my son doesn’t make the same mistakes I made.”
- “She’s our financial ticket.”
- “It’s his choice to play. He wants to do it.”
- “From the moment she came out of the womb, she was going to be a soccer player.”



In Our Minds?

- What do you consider failure to be?
- When is embarrassment OK?
- Stand up!



Framing Learning

- Self Mastery vs Outcome Orientation
 - What is success?
 - Are mistakes OK?
- What are we really saying with our words and actions?



Perspectives of Some Players

- How do children interpret their stressors?
 - ❑ Others won't like me unless I am a star
 - ❑ People do not care about me, they only care about the way I play
 - ❑ My parents like "Johnny" better
 - ❑ No matter how hard I try, it is never good enough
 - ❑ If I don't play, I won't get yelled at
 - ❑ This is not fun
 - ❑ I have no time to do anything I want to do



Who Makes the Decisions?

- Early teens want autonomy and independence
 - Young teens want to express selves
 - They want to separate from parents
- Coaches and parents make most of decisions for players
- Goals clash = no fun



Who Knows When to Stop?

- Negative Training Syndrome
 - Coaches/Parents misuse the “Overload Principle”
 - Excessive Physical/Psych overload without adequate rest
 - Decreased performance
- Did players choose these ends?



Athlete Identity Issues

- Players are trying to develop an identity in this culture created by adults.....what is the often the result?



- Who are you?.....I'm an athlete
- What do you do outside of sports?.....Nothing
- What do you want to be when you grow up?....
...An athlete



Signs of Seriousness

- Depression
- Apathy
- Physical/Mental Exhaustion
- Persistent illness/injury prone
- Withdrawal/Alienation
- Sense of Failure/Low Self Esteem



Create a Positive Environment

- Set performance goals that are short-term and attainable
- Selective Use of the Democratic Process (team goals, favorite activities)
- “Speak With” vs “Talk At” (listen)
- Encourage creativity and risk-taking (we learn from mistakes)
- Allow players to laugh
- Have fun yourself, it is contagious!



Create a Positive Environment

- Focus on emotions of players, not your own!
 - Who accepts criticism well, who does not?
 - Group vs. individual feedback
 - Gender differences
- Ask questions of your players at practices and games:
 - How do you feel?
 - What did you do well?
 - What could you have done better?
 - What can we do to insure that?



Create a Positive Environment

- Parent Education, Parent Education, Parent Education
 - Clarify Expectations of Parental Behavior (ride home)
 - Keep open communication
 - Detail your goals for team and player to parents
 - Ask why their child plays?
 - What are child's goals? Parent's goals? (vicarious?)
 - Watch interactions between player and parent
 - Involve parents in selected team activities



What To Do If Too Late?

For those who stay:

- Listen to your player's problems and empathize
- Recommend selected days off
- Do what you can to help them develop coping skills (attributions)



What To Do If Too Late?

For those who depart:

- Be involved w/ establishing amount of time to take off
- Maintain communication throughout this period
- Discuss situation with parents
- Recommend a counselor



The Game For All Kids!

- Shall we define an age bracket to clarify who qualifies as a “kid”?
- “I have never lost a game...some have just been called before we were done playing!”
--unknown
- Lifelong Fun!



Further Questions?

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