Fear of Failure Among Student Athletes: The Importance of Grit, Resilience, and Perseverance

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Many student athletes fear failure and this prevents them from performing their best. Failure exists on a number of different levels, for example, failing oneself, failing a coach, or failing a parent. Failure also results from settling for mediocrity, a problem that is becoming frequent among young athletes today. It is imperative that student athletes learn and develop the importance of the qualities of grit, resilience, and perseverance. These three attributes prepare athletes by giving them the tools they need to become fearless players, focusing only on what they can control, rather than focusing on what they cannot. To address the problem that failure is creating among student athletes today, this project describes a program for coaches to help their student athletes understand the importance of having a growth mindset. In effect, athletes would, overtime, realize that grit, resilience, and perseverance are learned skills, not inborn traits. With this foundation, student athletes will be able to think past fear and change their relationship with failure. The program consists of three phases carried out over the course of three weeks, one week to focus on each of the three qualities listed above. This program has the ability to be life changing, helping student athletes reach not only their goals, but also their highest potentials. It helps student athletes develop their mental toughness, a skill that can be used during competitions and during high pressure situations. Exposing athletes to these skills can propel them to greatness, and that is something that every student athlete should have the opportunity to experience.