

Helping Coaches Build Champion Programs Since 1996 **CHAMPIONSHIP PERFORMANCE**

Motivation

The Best Athlete Never Wins

Great news. After many months in the development process, we're proud to announce the all new and revised version of our best seller "Read This Book Tonight to Help You Win Tomorrow" will be released February 15th. Here is the first chapter to give you a sample. We've added 75 new motivational quotes and a dozen inspirational short stories and bullet lists for better performance.

Tommy Lasorda, the legendary manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team, had a secret weapon. Whenever he felt his team absolutely had to win a game, Lasorda used his secret weapon and the Dodgers almost always won.

In a little while, I'm going to tell you exactly what Lasorda's secret weapon was because the same thing that worked for Lasorda's Dodgers is going to work for you.

So let's get started . . .

I'm Dr. Rob Gilbert and for the last 30 years I've been teaching sport psychology at Montclair State University in New Jersey. Over the years, I've helped thousands of athletes just like you to do their best when it means the most.

Tomorrow you have an important

competition, tournament, match or game. Let me ask you four questions:

#1. Suppose you stay up all night tonight lifting weights. Will you be stronger tomorrow?

Of course not.

#2. Suppose you run all night. Will you be faster and have more endurance tomorrow?

Definitely not.

#3. Suppose you spend all night practicing. Will you be more skilled tomorrow?

Once again, no, no, no.

#4. BUT . . . can you have a better ATTITUDE tomorrow than you do right now?

Absolutely!

You can't improve your strength, speed or skill overnight, but you can improve your attitude. In other words, between tonight and tomorrow, you can go from a losing attitude to a winning attitude.

That's exactly what this book will do for you. This book will show you exactly what to do so you can . . .

HAVE THE MINDSET OF A WINNER.

But hold on!

If you want to have the mindset of a winner, there is one thing you absolutely cannot do.

There is one thing that will guarantee

failure. There is one thing that will destroy you.

There is one thing that'll rob you of any chance you have of winning tomorrow.

This one thing is . . .

YOU CANNOT LOSE HOPE.

Why??? Because once you lose hope, you lose all your chances of winning.

If you feel it's hopeless because your opponent is so good - you'll lose.
If you feel it's hopeless because you're so bad - you'll lose.

Here's the truth: In sports, there are no hopeless situations.

My first job is

TO GIVE YOU HOPE.

Let me tell you a story about the greatest underdog of all time, WHO COULD HAVE LOST HOPE BUT HE Didn't.

It was way back during biblical times and David was to go on the field of battle the next day to fight a gargantuan named Goliath.

David was just about to go to bed when three of his friends came into his tent to make a condolence call. Basically, they told David that it was nice knowing him because they knew he was going to get killed the next day.

See The Best Athlete Page 3...

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Phelps Displays the Mind-Set of a Champion

What separates the best from the rest?

There are several mental qualities that you can find in very successful athletes, which distinguish them from all of their competition. However, one of the key ones is how they respond to adversity. When the proverbial garbage hits the fan, when things start going very wrong, real champions seem to take all of this in stride. They have the uncanny ability to not let the bad calls, mistakes and bad breaks knock them off center. As a result, they are able to quickly and seamlessly bounce back and return their performance to a high level. *How do they do that?*

This calm response to adversity is actually practiced. It comes out of an understanding that THE PROB-

LEM ISN'T THE PROBLEM: THE PROBLEM IS HOW YOU REACT TO THE PROBLEM!

So champions know that there are a variety of things that happen both before and during a competition that are directly out of their control. They also know that these uncontrollable events are upsetting and distracting. However, what they have figured out is that it's not the event itself that hurts the athlete and knocks him/her off track as much as it is the athlete's response to that event. So while you can't control the uncontrollables, you can learn to control your response to them.

Case in point: Michael Phelps, the most decorated Olympic athlete ever was taught mental rehearsal at a very young age by his long time coach, Bob Bowman. He was taught to mentally practice "performing" exactly the way he would like to. However, Phelps did something additional with his mental practice. He would systematically imagine things going wrong both before or during his performances and then "practice" successfully coping with each thing that went wrong. In this way he not only taught himself to expect the unexpected, but to know how to calmly handle these events.

Athletes have two choices whenever things go south during performances: They can see what is happening right now as a disaster and say things like, "This is awful! Why did this have to happen to me? I can't believe this! How can I possibly do my best with this crap going on?" or they can see this unexpected and upsetting occurrence as a CHALLENGE and figure out effective ways of handling it.

When you see things as a disaster, then they will get nervous and emotionally upset, lose focus and self-confidence and then fall apart

performance-wise. However, when they view things as a CHALLENGE and look for positive solutions to cover anything that could possibly go wrong, then they will go into your competitions with a new found sense of confidence, which will then help them stay calm and composed when the unexpected does indeed happen. In 2008, Michael Phelps was on the doorstep of Olympic history. He had just won 7 gold medals tying him with swimmer Mark Spitz and he had one race remaining, the 200 Meter Butterfly. With the world watching and untold pressure on him, Phelps dove in at the start and discovered that his goggles were leaking.

By the time he turned into the last 50, his goggles were completely full of water leaving him virtually blind. Phelps didn't panic, didn't slow down, didn't miss a beat. He simply switched his focus from the DISASTER to the CHALLENGE. He focused on counting his strokes for the last 50, knowing exactly how many he needed to get across the pool at the right speed. Of course, the rest is history as he won that race and became the first athlete ever to win 8 gold medals in one Olympics.

Conclusion: When things go badly for athletes, they have a choice. They can learn how to expect the unexpected and have ways in their arsenal to handle them. When they know how they'll handle adversity when it strikes, they will perform better under pressure. The key is to mentally practice coping strategies that always seem to hit at the most inopportune times.

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The Best Athlete Never Wins continued

“Wait a second,” David said. “You think Goliath’s going to win?”

His friends nodded.

“No way,” David said.

“How can you be so confident?” one of his friends asked.

“Simple. God is on my side. I have my slingshot and Goliath’s so big- HOW CAN I POSSIBLY MISS!”

How was David able to be so positive?

How was David able to have so much hope?

Because he knew something you need to know. David knew that . . .

THE BEST ATHLETE NEVER WINS.

I know this sounds strange, but stay with me, I’ll explain.

Would you have bet money that David would beat Goliath? Of course not.

IT WAS A HOPELESS SITUATION.

Goliath was bigger.
Goliath was stronger.
Goliath was fiercer.

In other words, Goliath was better in every respect.

But he lost.

Why did he lose?

Goliath lost because even though he was better, David fought better.

You see . . .

THE BEST ATHLETE NEVER WINS.
THE ATHLETE WHO PLAYS BEST ALWAYS WINS.

It doesn’t matter who is better - all that matters is who plays better.

It doesn’t matter who is bigger - all that matters is who plays better.
It doesn’t matter who is seeded or ranked higher - all that matters is who plays better.

THE PERSON OR TEAM WHO IS BETTER DOESN’T WIN.

THE PERSON OR TEAM WHO PLAYS BETTER DOES.

David was the first in a long list of winners who weren’t “supposed to” win.

Have you seen the movie “Miracle” about the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team? They were “supposed to” lose to the invincible Russians. But the United States won. Why? Even though the Russians were the better team, the United States was the team that played better.

Here’s a little piece of trivia . . .

Three days before the Olympic Games began in 1980, at an exhibition game at Madison Square Garden in New York City, the same two teams met. The Russians beat the Americans by a score of 10 - 3. Mike Tully, who covered that game as a sports writer, guest lectures in my sport psychology classes. He says that the Americans were so outclassed that night they were lucky they didn’t lose by a score of 20-0!

After that game, United States Coach Herb Brooks knew that his first job was not to let his team lose hope.

Ten days after that humiliating loss, the U.S. played the Russians for real in the Olympic tournament. Final score . . .

United States 4
Soviet Union 3

My first job is to give you the same type of hope that Herb Brooks gave his team.

My second job is to make sure you are the one who plays better tomorrow - so that you will win! Whether you’re “supposed to” or not.

So starting right now, remember no matter who you are competing against, no matter what happens - THERE IS HOPE.

I hope this acronym will help you to remember what we’ve just been talking about . . .

H.O.P.E.

Hold On Possibilities Exist

Excerpted from the all new and revised version of “Read This Book Tonight to Help You Win Tomorrow.”

<http://www.championshipperform.com/books/read-this-book-tonight>

Winning Ways

■ Featured Quotes on Belief and Self-Confidence

“To be a great champion you must believe you are the best. If you’re not, pretend you are.”

Muhammad Ali, Boxing Legend

“If you believe in yourself, have dedication and pride and never quit - you’ll be a winner. The price of victory is high, but so are the rewards.”

Bear Bryant, Football Coach

“You have to believe in yourself when no one else will.”

Sugar Ray Robinson, Boxing Champ

“Experience tells you what to do. Confidence allows you to do it well.”

Stan Smith, Tennis Legend

“Believe you can and you’re halfway there.”

Theodore Roosevelt, Former US President

“Success is the peace of mind that comes as the direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you have made the effort to become the best player you were capable of becoming.”

John Wooden, Basketball Legend

“If my mind can conceive it, my heart can believe it, then I know I can achieve it!”

Jesse Jackson, Minister and Former Presidential Candidate

Excerpted from the all new and revised version of “Read This Book Tonight to Help You Win Tomorrow.”

The Key Characteristics of Mental Toughness

According to Jim Loehr, author of *The New Toughness Training for Sports*, the most successful athletes are ones who can combat negative thoughts and can even change the way they are feeling.

“Tough competitors,” writes Loehr, “consistently use images of success, of fighting back, of having fun, of staying relaxed, of being strong in the face of adversity, to move their mind and emotions in those directions.”

The goal all athletes should strive for is to make their self-image “strong, vivid, and courageous.”

Elite athletes know how to “see” themselves succeeding. Through techniques of “visualization” and “mental rehearsal,” many athletes go through the exact motions of a competition in their head mentally practicing each move, noting their feelings, even the way they are breathing at a certain moment.

Sports psychologists say mental rehearsal actually improves the brain-body links to help your moves come more automatically--and that studies have shown that athletes who visualize success better their chances during competition.

They learn to see stress as a challenge, not a threat. Athletes who view stressful situations as a threat actually produce more hormones and chemicals in their body that can impair physical and mental performance.

Athletes who meet stress as a challenge create a rush of adrenaline and sugar inside their bodies--a natural “high” that is probably responsible for what athletes call a sense of “flow,” of heightened awareness as they perform. If athletes can learn to encounter stress and say, “Great! I’m ready for this!” they are more likely to succeed.

They use humor to break up tension.

“When you think nutty, goofy, silly, funny, off-the-wall thoughts, fear and anger vaporize,” Loehr notes.

Sport psychologists say the ability to ask tough questions (*What could I have done differently? What have I learned that I can use in the future?*) is critical.

They develop what Loehr calls a **“just for today” spirit**. Sometimes it seems too hard to say “I will always do something”, whether it’s eating right, studying hard, or practicing a boring drill in your sport.

But successful players develop the self-discipline to commit themselves to doing it right just for today. Mentally, it’s easier to think about controlling what you do on a single day - and if you succeed today, tomorrow becomes a little easier.

Athlete Success Profile

Suggs Odd-ball Communication Inspires Team

Baltimore Ravens linebacker Terrell Suggs is often the loudest man on the field and all but certainly the loudest player in the NFL, according to his teammates. He is renowned for screaming anything that pops into his mind at the top of his lungs. And here’s the funny thing: Those teammates aren’t annoyed. They say Suggs’s bombastic baritone comes in handy in a sport where communication is crucial.

They say it cuts through the most hostile crowd noise in the NFL and can be heard clearly from all 11 positions on the field.

“No matter how loud the crowd is, I’m like ‘I can still hear you, bro.’ It’s crazy being able to hear him over any crowd,” said defensive tackle Terrence Cody.

“We’ll be having problems stopping the run and [Suggs] will just start yell-

ing and stuff. We can hear him and we know what we have to do.”

When he’s not bellowing lines from Will Ferrell movies, Suggs can shout out any number of directions to teammates: He may point out a tell in the opposing offense’s alignment, indicate if a player is lined up in a peculiar manner, or point out if the play is likely moving in one specific direction. *Suggs’s famously thorough devotion to studying game film helps him to identify any of these subtle movements before each play.* So the Ravens’ defensive players say they have what amounts to Suggs in their ear at all times.

Suggs also just likes yelling. He loves yelling random movie quotes as much as he does helping players make strategic adjustments.

Ravens linebacker Paul Kruger said Suggs is so loud that he cannot tune

him out, even when he badly wants to. Suggs’s noise isn’t limited to game day, Kruger said. He also yells throughout practice—his usual mixture of useful information and pure nonsense.

Teammates say that last week, Suggs’s most baffling yells centered around the team needing to “find Costello’s rat,” a reference to Martin Scorsese’s “The Departed.” How this was relevant remains a mystery. But his material is always changing.

“He’ll have a new thing for the Super Bowl. We don’t know yet, he’s going to watch 20 movies, he’ll find quotes and we’ll have to figure out what he’s yelling about,” one teammate said.

Why Olympians Rarely "Choke"

All athletes can benefit from the kinds of mental strategies elite athletes follow, things like following a routine or adopting a mantra to guide them through crucial moments.

U.S. soccer midfielder Megan Rapinoe says she gets "into the zone" on the way to the stadium by putting on headphones and listening to her favorite music.

An athlete probably wouldn't think of singing to themselves as they step up to make a free throw. But if the game is on the line, it may not be a bad idea, says a researcher who studies one of the most unpleasant experiences in sports — choking under pressure.

That's "when we have the ability to perform at a high level, and we just can't pull it out when it matters the most," says University of Chicago sport psychologist and author of the book called 'The Choke'. "When all eyes are on us, when there's something on the line, we often don't ... put our best foot forward."

Why do athletes choke? They start worrying about the consequences of failure, what's on the line, and what others will think of them.

When the big moment arrives, the athlete tries to take control by thinking about the mechanics of how to shoot that basketball, make that putt, or swing that racquet.

"That's the worst thing you can do in the moment," Bielock says. "What messes you up is not the worries, but the over attention to detail."

As Yogi Berra once put it, "How can you hit and think at the same time?"

So how do you keep your skill on autopilot, so it works the best? Take your mind off the details of your movement. Sing to yourself or count backward by threes as you step up to the crucial shot, Bielock advises, who used the song trick while playing college lacrosse. Maybe you can just say "smooth" or "straight" to yourself as a mantra as you act.

Another trick is to get used to pressure situations by practicing under the gaze of an observer or a video camera. Still another is to write down your worries before a big event. It's "almost like downloading them" from your mind so "they're less likely to pop up and distract you in the moment," she says.

Research shows competitors do better when they follow routines before they perform, like a golfer before a putt or a pitcher before throwing. Each athlete has to discover the routine that works consistently.

Example: Before each run, certain individual Olympic skiers would go off by themselves to focus on the course while others would joke around with their buddies and appear carefree until just before their turn came. The key is that they all figured out what worked for them.

Many golfers have problems dealing with a mistake, "and then that mistake compounds itself to another mistake and another mistake," said Damon Burton, a professor of sport psychology at the University of Idaho.

"I think every golfer can typically benefit from being able to forget about a bad last shot, and focus their attention on the next shot."

How? He suggests a moratorium strategy for thinking about a shot you've just made. Celebrate a good one or feel bad if it was a dud, but only for a brief time.

"It's all right to be disappointed, but as soon as that club goes back in the bag, that last shot is behind you," he says. After that, when you take your next club out of your bag - that's a signal to focus totally on that next shot."

In general, he says, it's best for athletes to focus on what they can control in the game. So baseball players should focus on making good contact with the ball, and worry less about the result. If a solidly hit ball ends up as an out, the batter's response should be, "Hey, I did my job on that pitch," Burton said.

Excerpted from the Washington Times sports section. www.washingtontimes.com

“

Great courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the ability to fight through it.

”

Pat Summit, Former Tennessee Women's Basketball Coach

Jefferson's Leader Strategies

Here are 3 leadership strategies from former US President Thomas Jefferson used to lead the nation during trying times.

1) Approach even the most daunting tasks with total optimism. Jefferson always faced the future with the absolute belief that humanity and life in America were certain to get better, not worse.

He kept himself fit and healthy. He had an optimistic outlook and a positive view of human nature. Jefferson deeply believed that once the institutions that cramped and blocked the flow of individual energies were removed, the flow of good energy from individuals out into the world would make the world a better place.

Example: Many influential people of his day feared that the colonies could not win the Revolutionary War against Britain. Jefferson believed it was inevitable that America would win. He further believed that the institutions being established in the US after the revolution would survive and the US was destined to become the world's greatest nation.

The message Jefferson delivered was extraordinarily attractive--we as a people could accomplish anything we set out to do, no matter how overwhelming the odds against success. In the darkest early days of our nation, Jefferson was there to assure Americans that the Republic was sound. People took Jefferson seriously, taking his words to heart and believing in their spirit. Because the people believed, they were able to act in ways that made it possible to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

Coaching application: Your attitude and expectancy of success goes a long way. Your will to win is the primary force that will carry over to the team.

2) When it is time to act--act decisively. Jefferson's ability to act decisively when necessary made all the difference.

Example: In 1803, the French leader Napoleon wanted to cut his losses in the New World and concentrate on fighting his enemies in Europe. So he offered to sell the Louisiana Territory - half the continent - to the US

for virtually nothing. The Louisiana Purchase was not an easy decision for Jefferson. He believed that his powers as president were limited and he did not have the power to make such a decision alone.

But Napoleon was an impulsive leader, who soon began having second thoughts. Faced with the realization that delay might break the deal, Jefferson cast aside his doubts and completed the purchase.

After having made his decision, he wrote, "It is incumbent on those who accept great charges, to risk themselves on great occasions."

Coaching application: Sometimes, you have time to review and second guess decisions. Others must be made quickly. Don't be afraid of stepping out of your comfort zone when the opportunity presents itself.

3) Knowledge is the key to achievement. Jefferson's appetite for knowledge and sense of excellence was incredible. As a student, he spent as many as 14 hours a day at his books, with three hours more devoted to practicing his violin. As an adult, he was among the leading thinkers of his day in a number of fields - including politics, science, art, architecture, literature and history.

There was a very practical side to the impressive levels of knowledge that Jefferson developed in so many areas. As a political leader, when he made a decision, he wasn't drawing narrowly on the political information of the moment. He could draw on all that he knew to make decisions that were seasoned and balanced and have stood the test of time.

Coaching application: Besides Championship Performance, read a host of books on achievement - in and out of coaching. The more knowledge at your disposal, the better leadership decisions you will make.

■ Peak Performance Bullets

■ Two Innovative Goal Setting Techniques

The ultimate result of goal setting should be to make athletes thrilled with the idea of bettering themselves and their teammates.

Recommendation: Here are two specific ideas that will get you started: 1. *Parcel your sport into "little games"*. Make these games part of your goal system in both practice and competition. For example, a golfer could concentrate on improving his score on an individual hole instead of worrying about the total score after nine. A baseball team could have a contest on who could get the most hits in a week with the winner given some type of reward.

2. *Use interval goal setting techniques.* This technique involves taking your best score or performance and using it as a "floor" to push you to an upper boundary. By using previous best performance as a starting block, the subsequent midpoint performances will soon be better than an athlete's previous best. If this technique is too pressure filled, try utilizing your average score or performance as the "floor" to build on.

■ The Power of Optimism

In the book *Learned Optimism*, author Martin Seligman determined that optimism is the most important quality you can develop for personal and professional success and happiness. Optimistic people are more effective in almost every area of life. Why? Because they approach the world with gratitude and hope rather than fear and regret. Optimists have four special behaviors, all learned through conscious practice and repetition. First, optimists look for the good in every situation. They always find blessings for which to be grateful. Second, optimists always seek the valuable lesson in every setback. They're thankful even for hardships, interpreting difficulty as instruction rather than obstruction. Third, optimists always look for the solution to every problem. Instead of blaming or complaining when things go wrong, they take action in the hopes of improving their situation. They ask questions like, "What's the solution? What can we do now? What's the next step?" Fourth, optimists think and talk continually about their goals.

How Twitter Impacts Athletic Performance

Kentucky basketball player Willie Cauley-Stein briefly deleted his Twitter account after his followers let him know about how poorly he had played in a previous game. Though he has since reactivated his account, the way Cauley-Stein reacted to criticism on Twitter isn't unusual, according to research published in the *International Journal of Sport Communication*.

Assistant professors Blair Browning of Baylor and Jimmy Sanderson of Clemson found that student-athletes dealt with critical tweets in one or more of the following ways: 1) Ignoring it; 2) Using it as motivation; 3) Blocking users sending nasty tweets; or 4) Responding to critics or tweeting a general response about working harder (or "subtweeting" – not directly responding to a Twitter user but responding to the subject matter in general). Since rejoining Twitter, Cauley-Stein has retweeted supportive messages from fans and answered others criticizing his missed free throws by explaining the pressure of playing in front of more than 20,000 fans. "Of course, the (Kentucky players) were attentive to what (negative things) were being said," Browning said. "Though hate mail has always been around, it was a lot harder to get it to people in the past. Now with the immediacy of Twitter, it's immediately in front of their eyeballs."

Browning and Sanderson began their research after they observed that when high-profile athletes at their schools performed poorly, they still rushed to check Twitter and see what people were saying about them during and after games.

"It made me realize these guys are drawn to it, and it's become so ingrained in them to want to know what people say," Browning said. "These guys now have the avenue to look up directly what people are saying. What Twitter has opened up is what people saying to them."

"People spew some pretty vitriolic things to these players."

Browning interviewed 20 athletes (10 football players, five men's basketball players, three women's basketball players and two baseball players) to collect qualitative information for the study. Only two of the 20 kept their accounts private, which prevented them from the onslaught of positive and/or negative fan tweets.

The researchers said they weren't surprised with the coping techniques student-athletes told them they employed when dealing with criticism.

"What did surprise me was the fact that they said, 'It didn't bother me,' yet they acknowledged that they would still check Twitter to see what was being said about them," Sanderson said. "For many of them, they put on this front that it doesn't bother them but it clearly does. They are the conversation. People are actually talking about them, and as an 18 to 21 year-old kid, you're very invested in what people are saying about you."

According to Georgetown forward Nate Lubick: "A lot of kids are searching their names and get caught up in stuff, like whenever there's an article written about them. I never, ever read any of that stuff. Did I at the beginning (of my career)? Yeah, absolutely. But as you go on, you learn to stop."

Besides avoiding game coverage and social media, is there a solution for student-athletes dealing with nasty, hyper-critical tweets after poor performances?

Browning and Sanderson say yes: Education. They believe major universities should teach student-athletes how to manage messages they send and receive before they start tweeting as college athletes. Most schools are not proactive, and they monitor social media use as it happens, according to the researchers.

"(Twitter) can be a really constructive, positive tool but we need to train and educate our student-athletes instead of putting all this money toward being watchdogs," Browning said. "Just train on the front-end, instead of being reactionary."

Virginia Commonwealth's Ed McLaughlin and Florida Atlantic's Patrick Chun are two athletic directors who understand that. Both said they meet with individual teams prior to the season to discuss the dangers of careless social media use. McLaughlin said that topic is even covered in VCU's student-athlete code of conduct. VCU also brings in a consultant to talk to teams that meet with media often to talk about branding.

McLaughlin and his staff are mostly wor-

ried about obvious no-nos, like photos of underage athletes drinking. With more minor transgressions – such as tweeting something they probably shouldn't have in the heat of the moment after a game – McLaughlin said VCU deals with them on a case-by-case basis to hopefully catch the mistake quickly and not let it turn into something bigger. If administrators and coaches follow their athletes on Twitter, they're able to find these "teachable moments," as McLaughlin calls them, faster. "We tell them all the time when you put something on the Internet, it is forever," McLaughlin said. "Our athletics communications folks work with them, and we also ask our coaches to make sure they monitor it, too."

"We try to stress the things that could be inappropriate, things that could be harmful or embarrassing for you, your family or your team. We try to stress those things and teach them about them so when they get in the working world – whether it's work as a professional athlete or work as a doctor or whatever – they don't make a tragic mistake that's really, really going to hurt them."

Chun's message to athletes at FAU is the same; he said he and his staff stress social media's risks and rewards with "constant reaffirmation and constant re-education." "It's what's called a virtual tattoo," Chun said. "You tweet something or Facebook something, and it could be there forever. You have to be smart about it."

Even when a player is receiving negative comments or someone is trying to provoke him or her into saying something. "We haven't had an incident like that per se on our campus yet, but it could happen," Chun said. "We've got to keep reminding our kids to take the high road and be real vigilant about the things you say or sometimes you don't say, which could be more important. ... You don't know what's going to trigger a negative thing, but you just have to remind kids that everything (they) say does have an impact."

Excerpted from a USA Today article by Nicole Auerbach
web: www.usatoday.com

Klinsmann on the Upgrading US Soccer

Here are US national soccer team Jurgen Klinsman's thoughts on the state of US soccer, including their mental attitude and what the US needs to do to take their game to the next level.

On the U.S. team's mental approach: We made some progress in terms of having the confidence to challenge the big nations, with a thought in mind to say we want to beat you here if we go to Italy or to Mexico. If we lose, so be it, maybe you were the better team and then we give you a compliment, but until the game is over we are going to give you a real fight.

On the importance of peer pressure for U.S. players: This learning process, more and more they will understand it, that it is important that you know what you eat, that it is important that you know what sleep does to you. It is important that you know what alcohol will do to you if you consume it. The environment didn't teach them those things before.

You play in Italy, your environment will teach you that. You go out to a restaurant they will watch you carefully what you eat and what you drink and if you drink more than two glasses of wine you get the looks from people. You understand by the looks—am I doing the right thing or the wrong thing? If you are in Europe or in South America, you are right away accountable for your actions. The soccer player here is not bothered to be out at 3 o'clock in a night club, but if you would do that in Europe, this would be in the newspaper.

On the differences between an American and European player: We would say it would be great if our 18- or 19- or 20-year-olds would have an environment where they get pushed every day, where they are

accountable every day, where they understand what it means to be a pro, where they have 11 months of training, games, training, games - where they have a chance to build their stamina to build their systems so you can really take in the game as a leading component, not just seven or eight months and then I go on vacation.

On what's missing in U.S. Soccer: It's not the accountability environment that we have in these other soccer-driven countries. [Players in the U.S.] settle very early because they don't get the peer pressure. If a player makes it to MLS when he is 18- or 19-years old, he thinks he made it. This is the problem we have because we are not socially so connected so deeply to soccer in the daily life. They think, you get a tryout in Europe with West Ham, this is huge, you made it. No, you haven't even made it just because you have the contract with West Ham. And even if you play there and if you become a starter, which would make us happy, that still doesn't mean that you made it.

My whole talk to Clint Dempsey for 18 months was [about how] he hasn't made s—. You play for Fulham? Yeah, so what? Show me you play for a Champions League team, and then you start on a Champions League team and that you may end up winning the Champions League. There is always another level. If you one day reach the highest level then you've got to confirm it, every year. Confirm it to me. Show me that every year you deserve to play for Real Madrid, for Bayern Munich, for Manchester United. Show it to me.

On the importance of attitude: There is a difference between arrogance and confidence. And if you have three or four players on a 23- or

24-man roster that thinks it's going to be easy you are done. And so [the German team] threw away a quarterfinal against Bulgaria (in 1994). We thought we won it already. It was 1-nil up, we scored a second goal, it was disallowed. It was a clear goal we thought at Giants Stadium, and suddenly they hit you with a free kick and a header and within a few minutes the game was over. And you stand on the field and you say, 'Hold on a second. Rewind. What just happened? We are the better team.'

On what makes Spain so good: They have that approach to the game that carries them from title to title, because they never get content they never get settled with the last success and they want to continue to play on a very high level.

On his impact on the U.S. style: I can't come with my German approach and say this is how I want to do it in the U.S., because in the U.S., it would fail. I have certain experiences in different countries, I can understand many connections there, but I have to do it the way it is best for the players here, not how I would like to have it if I were somewhere else.

On the worst of what he has seen: The inconsistency. You got to prove it in a bad environment as well as in a good environment. You got to prove it on a bad field the same way as on a nice field. *You must give the same energy, the same determination, the same confidence*, no matter where or who we are playing. We must give the signals to the opponent that we are not here to get beaten. Just adjust to wherever you are.

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