

Winter 2018

Newsletter



The Well Balanced Athlete

Dr. Alex Diaz addressing Byram Hills High School - open to the public

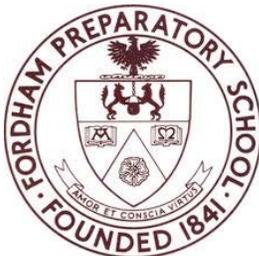
February 13th



January 30th **Sport Psychology** talk with the Squash team at Convent of Sacred Heart of Greenwich, CT



March 6th and April 25th a talk with Fordham Prep parents (father first one; mothers second one) regarding: "**Adversity Enhances Resilience.**"



What Can We Learn from Top Athletes?

One of the quotes that better describes the mindset of successful athletes says, "Top athletes train as if they are the worst, yet compete as if they are the best." I find it to be a humble, yet a powerful description of how an elite athlete goes about the mental preparation to succeed. Success is not consistently achieved by just showing up to compete and trying your best. Elite athletes clearly understand that the best predictor of success is a well-structured practice that pushes their physical, strategic, and mindset boundaries. Only when practices are used to their fullest potential, ideal performance are achieved.

Here are the best five habits shared by elite athletes that we can also implement:

1- **Goal setting**

Elite athletes plan their course of action by specifically setting out their goals under a reasonable time-table. Knowing exactly what they want to achieve pushes them to take action in direction toward constant improvement. Goals are broken down by identifying long-term objectives first and then working backwards by setting short term goals. One way to effectively stay on track on the achievement is by using a SMART chart. Eliud Keichogue, who ran 2nd in the 2016 London Marathon, kept track of all his progress, which helps him to remind himself of all his success and progress he was making to meet his goals.

SMART Chart

Specific	• Swim 20 laps by June 30, 2018
Measurable	• Swim three times a week
Attainable	• Swim 10 laps by March 31, 2018
Realistic & Relevant	• Improve health and conditioning
Timed	• Starting January 15, 2018

Winter 2018

Newsletter



2- Embrace mistakes as a learning experience

Elite athletes compete against themselves. All their focus is on improving their skills, mindset and performance. Missing the achievement of a goal is not a setback, but rather an opportunity to learn and improve for next time. Avoiding mistakes will only limit their achievements. Learning how to cope with setbacks will push them to achieve their goals. They see a big difference between obstacles versus challenges. The former places focus on the negative whereas the latter on the positive. Elite athletes are constantly learning from all their opportunities that are given and use that experience to feed more information and critical thinking to plan better for next time.

3- Sleep

Usain Bolt shared that his unnegotiable preparation routine is sleep. Sleeping is a time to recover and re-energize the body and mind. Make sure your room is free from electronics, a bit on the cooler side as it helps to rest the body quicker, and maintain a routine. Equally effective are power-naps. It provides time for the body to heal and, most importantly, for the mind to be fresh and ready to react and respond.

4- Imagery

The imagery of attaining goals is a powerful tool that feeds the brain with positive energy, optimism and motivation. Athletes visualize the achievement of their goal prior to starting each of their performances and practices. There are two ways of doing imagery work: Internal Imagery: the athlete sees him/herself executing the ideal performance by bringing in as vivid an

imagery as possible. The athlete “feels” the entire experience of the performance as if he/she is really doing it. The clearer and the more vivid the imagery is, the more the body will remember such an experience.

External Imagery: the athlete sees him/herself competing as if he/she was on a canvas or screen of a movie theatre. In this case, there is an imaginary distance where the athlete “sees” him/herself successfully completing the entire performance rather than sensing it in his/her body.



5- Be happy

Katie Ledecky, a multiple time Olympic and World swimming champion, has learned to take competition in a happy, more relaxed manner. She shares that she places anxious moments at an arm’s length by bringing positive thoughts to any negative thoughts that start to creep into her mind. She finds that smiling and laughter brings relaxation and are natural remedies to alleviate stress.

Hope these tips used by elite athletes are equally incorporated in your routines. If it works from them, it can clearly work for us.

Winter 2018

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“Knowledge will give you power, but character respect.” Bruce Lee



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[Mental Focus in Match Play](#)

[A Personality Trait That Top Athletes Share](#)



Stay warm,



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