

HOW TO BREAK THE LOSING TRADITION

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY

Part five in a series

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This seems to be a million dollar question for a number of coaches. Losing can be as contagious as a communicable disease. The average coach many times will spend more time on physical training and work his team harder when in the throes of losing. This is probably the worst thing to do. Continual losing is not a physical malady; rather, it is a frame of mind. A losing tradition or a winning tradition can be established according to the attitudes portrayed by the coaches and the players. Following are a few suggestions on how to overcome the losing tradition:

1. Develop a new start. Even if you have a veteran returning team, return to the beginning and have a fresh start. Let the team know that everyone is on equal ground. No one has a starting position automatically. Every player must earn his place on the team. This may be disconcerting to some of the older players on the team, but it will be highly motivating to the younger athletes. Nothing contributes more to the perpetuation of losing than feelings of frustration or helplessness by the players. A lot of coaches feel that older experienced players should be given the nod over younger players. This is wrong. Talent (demonstrated) should be the sole criteria for playing positions.

Along with this new start, the coach should attempt to change everything. Schedules, offenses, and defenses should be modified or totally changed. Yes, this causes a lot of work for the coach but —

Players need to be shaken out of their comfort zones.

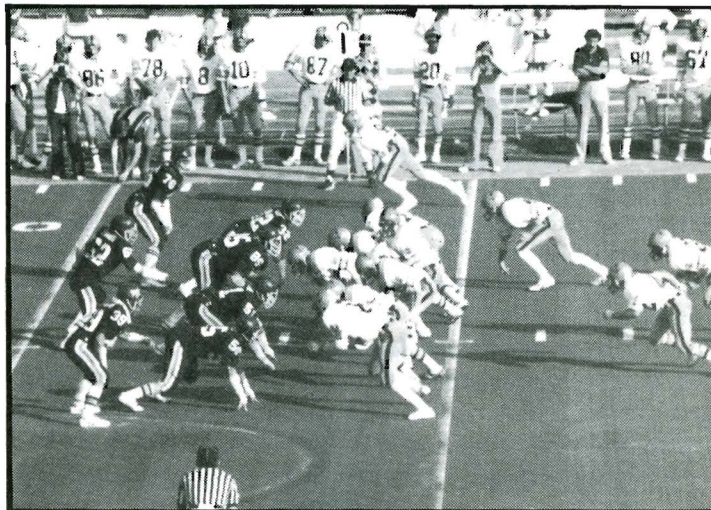
By changing everything possible, the coach is in essence "wiping out the past" and forcing everyone to start afresh. A new set of habits and attitudes are being formed which are not based on past experiences while in a losing posture. Dwell on the future and not the past. The past, if a losing tradition has been established, can only be negative; while the future can be structured in a positive view.

One caution — do not use revenge or past scores as incentives.

These techniques are negative in nature and normally backfire over the long haul.

2. Dwell on the good, not the bad; the positive, not the negative. When losing, it is easy to fall into a negative attitude and become the pessimist. Coaches are frequently guilty of this and the players naturally model this behavior.

Concentrate on and reward performances rather than outcomes.



Develop a new start: Maybe a new offense or new defense.



Dwell on the good: As kids make progress continually be positive.



Work together as a team to build pride and confidence. 25

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Have each player concentrate upon his performances and stress the fact that if all the players perform well, the outcome is incidental. Winning will occur more often if the players are not worried about it. The coach must be continually positive and reward what is being done correctly instead of reinforcing mistakes or poor performances. Reward all of the things being done right and the things being performed wrong will slowly disappear.

Positive Paul will win more than Negative Neal.

3. Work on confidence. The most crucial psychological trait displayed by successful athletes, at all levels of competition, is self-confidence. Confidence is developed best under a positive atmosphere. Almost all humans respond better to a "pat on the back" rather than a "kick in the butt." Develop a "worth chart" for game performances and recognize great effort no matter the outcome of the contest. Remember:

You can not humiliate a person into greatness.

4. Develop pride in each player and for the team as a whole. Pride is the magic word. When each player has pride in himself, then he will strive to constantly do his best. Nothing short of excellence is acceptable. Also, team pride is essential. I am not talking about doing it for "ole North Side High School," that is a little childish. The coach must instill, in the team as a whole, — the pride of association with each other, and the pride of a job well done. The team and its' accomplishments is more important than any individual.

A coach can develop pride in the team by emphasizing cooperation rather than competition.

Helping the players learn to rely on each other fosters responsibility which translates into pride in a short time.

5. Stress the concept of the team. The most important factor which will help stem the tide of a losing tradition is to have the players realize the benefits of feeling like a team. When a team becomes of "primary" importance to each individual rather than a "secondary" association, he will give a 110% to see that it is successful. Sometimes young players will have the tendency to give up on themselves, but they never give up on their peer group. When the team becomes that all important peer group, the athlete has something to hang onto and dedicate himself. This is an awesome responsibility for the coach; but remember what a team stands for:

T = Total commitment

E = Effort of excellence

A = Achieve for each other

M = Motivation for the team

Only the psychological approach will change the losing tradition.

RESEARCH HELP WANTED!

If you have used the "Legg Shoe," we would like to know in writing your experiences, either Pro or Con. We have heard some amazing claims and want to know if there is any substance to these claims.

HISTORY OF ATHLETIC

WEIGHT TRAINING Continued from Page 26

WHO CAN PROFIT FROM A WEIGHT TRAINING PROGRAM?

Virtually everyone who follows a program of weight training will profit in varying degrees. It is most advantageous to the physically weak and underdeveloped. Beyond question it affords the greatest and fastest return in physical fitness for the time and energy expended. It has recently become most popular as a supplement to training programs for all athletes.

ARE WEIGHTLIFTERS MUSCLEBOUND?

The term **musclebound**, though commonly used, is probably not understood by most who use it. It is believed by most that the word was born of envy and personal rationalization on the part of those who were anything but well muscled. It is now used to describe persons who are heavily muscled and strong but who have little skill in activities which do not require excessive strength. The explanation is quite logical. Before weight training became popular and accepted as a means of training athletes, the only people who lifted weight were those who lifted them exclusively and devoted little or no time toward the development of athletic skills. Consequently, these people had little or no talent in other sports, and when this lack of talent became apparent, they were quick to be criticised by jealous on-lookers. Perhaps the word musclebound was thus born. It is a proven psychological fact that large, well-developed muscles are more responsive, stronger, and more flexible than smaller ones. No one has ever said that large muscles are a cure all and will take the place of time and effort spent on the practicing of athletic skills. Aside from this, once a young man becomes interested in improving his body through weight training, he often practices this activity to the near exclusion of all others. This, of course, he should not do. Large muscles, though attractive, should serve many useful functions.

JIM TAYLOR'S WORKOUT SCHEDULE

Exercise	Weight	Sets	Repetitions
Press	220	2	6
Dead Lift	380	2	6
Stiff Leg Dead lift	240	2	4
Rowing	240	2	6
Bench Press	240	2	6
One Arm Press	60	2	8
Side Lateral Arm Raises	40	2	4
Half Squats	340	2	4
Calf Raises	420	2	12
Curls	180	2	4

In Jim Taylor's schedule keep in mind the poundage listed under weight is the final product of many years of hard work.

Remember beginners these charts are for comparison only. Do not try to accomplish these until you are ready for them. Your coach will know your capabilities and adjust your schedule accordingly.