

How to destroy your child's athletic future in 3 steps

How To Destroy Your Child's Athletic Future In 3 Easy Steps

Posted by Matt Russ on December 10, 2015

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In over two decades of coaching athletes I have had the pleasure of seeing some of my junior athletes make it all the way to the professional level. Along the way I have developed a somewhat global perspective on what it takes to go from this point A to the very distant point B. I worked with some wonderful parents that contributed greatly to their child's successes. But I unfortunately witnessed more parents, sometime unwittingly and always with the best intentions, sabotage their child's athletic future. If they had just heeded a few simple rules, or examined a few of their motives, not only would their child been a better athlete, they would have been a better competitor, happier, and healthier child.

If you are find yourself excited at the potential of your child's athletic career, I invite you take an objective look within. And if you catch yourself doing any of the three following things, I can all but guarantee your child will not end up where you believe they will.

1. **Imposing your own ambitions upon your child.** I find it interesting that some of the most accomplished athletes I have known are not the overbearing parents you might expect when it comes to athletics. In fact they may take a somewhat laissez faire attitude towards their young children's athleticism. My personal opinion is that these parents have a greater understanding of the developmental process. Laying the foundation, learning

the skill sets, and graciously handling the pitfalls competition are put above awards and accolades. They are intimately familiar with the long timeline and sacrifices required to get to the top of a sport, and even the odds of getting there. They tend to be more respectful towards the coaches and patient with the coaching process. They in short have gained a perspective most of us do not possess.

Parents that have not experienced competition simply never developed the mental skills sets required of an athlete. They may be experiencing athletic competition for the first time through the prism of their child; which can be a very slippery slope. Others believe their child represents a "second chance" at righting the wrongs of their not so illustrious athletic past. At any rate the most important thing to understand is that a pre-adolescent child has three basic motivations for participating in a sport: to have fun, to socialize, and to please their parents. Too many children end up just doing the later, and that almost never works for long. These kids seldom last in a sport to high level competition, and may even end up quitting their sport, after years of development, because it is an convenient way to rebel against a parent. Post- competition, often the first words I hear from parents are evaluative or criticizing when they should be simply "did you have fun today?"

2. **Over-specializing too early.** I once consulted with a somewhat anxious dad regarding his injured daughters training. The doctor had advised three weeks off of training to allow her injury to heal, but he felt this was too conservative and that his daughter would give up too much ground by taking this time off. She was NINE years old by the way. Obviously he had his own agenda in mind and not his daughters best interest. I seriously doubted that she would still be competing in her sport at twelve.

There has been an astounding rise in orthopedic injuries among children in the last decade. This corresponds with the rise in early single sport specialization. Kids are training too hard, too often, too repetitively and way too early without a proper foundation. Training and coaching programs have capitalized on this, often ignoring orthopedic guidelines for training children in favor of showing early results to the parents. Children do not have a stable enough platform to put high volume training upon, especially during growth phases.

Injuries to growth plates, vertebral discs, meniscus tears, and tendon/ligament strain can leave a child with *permanent* damage. The body is not designed to repeat specific movements over and over, especially at an early age. We are designed for multi-planer movements which is more akin to "going outside and playing" vs. training. If you really want to develop an athlete from a young age you do just that-develop them. You develop skill sets and general coordination, strength, and agility that is *age appropriate*.

A good coach/parent should be charting growth phases and adjusting training load accordingly, monitoring rest and recovery, teaching and imposing proper nutrition, and developing mental skill sets. Yet these equally important areas of opportunity are often neglected. The bottom line is that if your child is getting chronically injured, or even if their team mates are sustaining a high level of overuse injuries, the coaching and training system is failing your child no matter how well their top athletes are performing.

- 3. Focusing on a Single Sport.** It is somewhat logical to believe that the more time spent training a sport the better an athlete will become over time. And no doubt the occasional Tiger Woods comes along. But this mentality more often leaves multiples of young athletes broken down on the side of the road. Developing an athlete is like unlocking a door. You must have exactly the right key, that engages all the tumblers of the lock, to open the door. Training is just one of the

tumblers- not the key.

A child will not self-actualize in a sport until adolescence as I mentioned above. In order to find out what they are really good at, really enjoy, and really want to succeed at they must try a number of things. This is good, this is healthy, and it keeps them from burning out in a single sport.

But too many parents see a bit of talent or aptitude and want to call it their child's "sport." Participating in multiple sports or activities may even help prevent the injuries associated with over-specialization. You should be asking your child if they want to try different sports, or even gently prodding them to do so. Over time they can narrow their focus. Joining the traveling soccer team at an early age may keep your child from finding out that they were more talented at (and passionate about) baseball.

If your child is under the age of twelve, and you find yourself on the sideline with the words "champion," "scholarship," and "phenom" swirling around your head you likely need a perspective check. One of the hardest lessons you will have to learn is that at some point *they* will get to decide if they want to continue in a sport. And there will be nothing you can do to *make* them compete if they no longer have the will or desire. It is a simple fact that all your hours in the car, thousands paid out for coaching, and years spent attending games and practices will likely, statistically, lead- nowhere. But that is not to say that they will get value out of the experience of competition. Sport can bring out the best (and sometimes the worst) in both athlete and parent alike. The values taught and gained on the athletic field will be far more valuable than any award; values such as sportsmanship, honor, integrity, fitness, hard work, and team work. Your relationship that you develop around your child's competition will have a huge impact on their future. The decisions you make as a parent will have a tremendous effect not only on your child's athletic development, but their

health, well being, and ethics. Choose wisely.

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Op 21 April 2016 skryf Rooimier

Op 21 April 2016 skryf Rooimier... Die Vrystaat het nie spoed nie!

As mens die hoërskole en die primêre skole se uitslae op hul onderskeie SA kampioenskappe ontleed, is dit opmerklik dat die twee provinsiale spanne altwee aan 'n te kort aan spoed ly!

<u>_</u>	<u>Op SA's</u>	<u>Op SA's</u>	<u>Op Interhoër</u>
<u>100m</u>	<u>1ste</u>	<u>8ste</u>	<u>1ste</u>
M /15	12.04	12.68	12.75
M /17	12.01	12.72	12.79
M /19	11.93	12.47	12.56

S /15	10.76	11.46	11.52
S /17	10.56	11.07	10.94
S /19	10.45	10.81	10.80

In die meeste gevalle sou die Vrystaatkampioen nie eens 8ste (m.a.w. in die finaal) op SA's kon kom nie!

Die toekoms lyk ook nie veel rooskeuriger nie: Op die SA Primêre Skole steek die Vrystaat ook sleg af in die naellope!

M/12	100m	2 in finaal	S/12	100m	0 in finaal
	150m	2 in finaal		150m	0 in finaal
M/13	100m	0 in finaal	S/13	100m	2de en 3de in finaal
	200m	0 in finaal		200m	1ste + nog 1 in finaal

Hier is dit darem so 50/50%, maar ook nie juis 'n sterkpunt nie!

As ons vinnigste atlete nie kompetierend in die naellope is nie, hoekom hardloop hulle dan in die naellope?

Hoekom skuif afrigters nie hierdie atlete na ander items waar hulle met hul beskikbare spoed beter sou vaar nie? Ek is van mening dat Mnr. X nie sy vinnigste atleet na 'n ander item sal aanbeveel nie, want hy rig naellope af, nie die ander item nie! Hy moet hou wat hy het – hy kan nie dit wat hy het weggee vir 'n ander afrigter om met die atleet te presteer nie.

Die atleet kon miskien in die hekkies of verspring of 400m beter, met die spoed tot sy/haar beskikking , gevaar het!

Die probleem is dat die skoolafrigtersgroep nie as 'n span

funksioneer nie! Dit is eerder 'n kwessie van elkeen vir himself – en dit benadeel die atleet, die skool en die Vrystaat.

Die meeste skole wat goed vaar in atletiek BEPLAN hul atlete se sukses! Hierdie beplanning word gewoonlik deur die oorkoepelende Atletiekorganiseerder gedoen, want hy/sy kyk na die groter prentjie. Gewoonlik is hy/sy ook nie betrokke by die saak as afrigter nie ...en die meeste beplanning word aan die hand van die Joba-tabelle gemaak:

By die kleursport word die atleet blootgestel aan 'n verskeidenheid van items en die items wat die meeste punte behaal, word outomaties die atleet se items.

MAAR ons moet 3 stappies verder gaan:

Eerstens moet Atletiekorganiseerders 'n bietjie daardie prestasies aan die hand van Vrystaat- en SA-standaarde meet! Die item, wat die meeste tabelpunte kry, is nie outomaties kompetierend op provinsiale en nasionale vlak nie.

Tweedens moet ons kennis gaan soek! Daar is ander afrigters wie se atlete in 'n sekere item presteer. Kontak hom/haar en gaan steek kers op. Die Vrystaat is bevoorreg om die VSAAV kursus in Desember te hê – hulle het ook Itemkoördineerders, wat jou kan help om by ander ervare afrigters uit te kom. Dit moet nie net 'n skoolspanpoging wees nie – dit kan ook 'n Vrystaatspanpoging word! Ons moenie skaam wees om te vra nie, of bang wees dat jou atleet afgerokkel gaan word nie!

Derdens moet ons [hoërskool- en laerskoolafrigters] in die Vrystaat koppe bymekaar sit om mekaar te help om werklike naelloopers te ontwikkel! Eerstens moet daar talentidentifikasie wees, maar daarna moet ons alles in die stryd werp om daardie atlete te ontwikkel tot kampioene! Hier dink ek aan 'n simposium vir naelloopafrigters, met net die beste senior afrigters om ons die pad te wys!

In 2016 het die Vrystaat se hoërskoolspan derde [2015 was hul 2de] en die primêre skoolspan vierde [hulle was al 2de] op hul onderskeie nasionale kampioenskappe gekom! Al manier om ons verlore glorie te herwin, is om een van ons swakpunte in 'n sterkpunt te omskep! 'n Paalspringer is slegs 'n paalspringer en 'n gewigstoter is gewoonlik slegs 'n gewigstoter, maar 'n uitstaande naelloper kan 'n klomp items [100m, 200m, hekkies en aflos] dek!

Oorbelaadingsbeserings

OORGEBRUIKSBERING IN ATLETIEK EN DIE BEHANDELING DAARVAN

Hierdie is 'n uittreksel uit "Voorkoming en behandeling van Sportbeserings" geskryf deur Dr Dawie van Velden, Uitgegee deur die Mediese Vereniging van SA, Pyramid Uitgewers, 1990.

Sportbeserings kan op vele maniere verhoed en ook verminder word indien soveel moontlik omtrent hul oorsake bekend is.

Oorgebruiksbeserings

Oor die afgelope paar dekades het voorbereiding vir atletiek al hoe meer intensief geword en kompetisies al hoe strawwer. Dit het uiteraard tot 'n vermeerdering in oorgebruiksbeserings gelei.

Oorgebruiksbeserings is waar 'n atleet sy/haar liggaam vir lang periodes aaneen ooreis en die spiere, ligamente en gewrigte uitermatig baie gebruik: in langafstandhardloop kan liggaamsweefsel beskadig word; in items, waar die betrokke tegniek nie korrek uitgeoefen word nie, kan spiere sowel as gewrigte en ligamente beseer word. Dan praat ons van

oorgebruiksbeserings, in teenstelling met kontaktsportbeserings. Eersgenoemde word ook INTRINSIEKE beserings genoem omdat daar geen eksterne trauma hierby betrokke is nie.

As gevolg van oorgebruik ontstaan daar inflammasie in die beskadigde weefsel, wat op sy beurt pyn, swelling en funksieverlies in die ledemaat of gewrig veroorsaak.

Die **oorsake van oorgebruiksbeserings** is uiteenlopend en sluit veral 3 oorsake in, nl.

Genetiese faktore:

Aangebore fisiese afwykings van enige liggaamsdeel, hoe gering ookal, word deur 'n intensiewe oefenprogram onder groot druk geplaas.

Omgewingsfaktore

Die omgewing waarin die sport beoefen word, kan 'n sterk invloed op die atleet se liggaam hê en weefsel beskadig. Hier dink ons aan 'n ongelyke hardloopoppervlakte, landingsarea's in ver- en driesprong, hoog- en paalspring, verkeerde skoene, ens.

Oefenfaktore

Verkeerde oefenmetodes is seker die algemeenste oorsaak van stresbeserings! Een of meer van die volgende 3 faktore is gewoonlik betrokke:

- Die oefenprogram is te lank [kwantiteit]
- Die oefenprogram is te straf [kwaliteit]
- Die vordering met die oefenprogram is te vining [progressie]
- Oorgebruiksbeserings ontstaan in die swakste skakel in die muskuloskeletale stelsel: hakskeenpyn, kniepyn en liesbeserings, waar die inplanting van spiere op die skelet nog nie so sterk is nie, kom algemeen by jong

atlete voor. Die ouer skoolatleet ervaar agterdyspier, lies-, knieg- en enkelligamente wat oorgebruik word. Die **behandeling van oorgebruiksbeserings** moet nougeset uitgevoer word, want die verwaarlosing van hierdie beserings kan ernstige gevolge [selfs operasies] vir die atleet inhou! Siende dat ons nie dokters/fisio's is nie, maak ons gebruik van die Engelse afkorting, nl. **R.I.C.E.**, as noodmaatreël as die besering plaasvind:

- **Rest:** Stop die oefening dadelik.
- **Ice:** Sit ys op die area om swelling teë te werk. Dit sal die dokter help as die betrokke area nie geswel is as ons daar kom nie...anders kan die herstelperiode moontlik verleng word.
- **Compression:** Immobiliseer die ledemaat met 'n verband indien moontlik
- **Elevation:** Lig die ledemaat op sodat bloed nie nou daar versamel nie.
- **...en neem dan die atleet direk na 'n dokter!**

En as/wanneer die atleet terugkeer na die oefenveld, moet die afrigter beseft dat die atleet nie sommer weer kan begin waar hy/sy laas was nie. 'n Gelydelike infasering in die program in sal uiteindelik weer die atleet so kondisioneer dat hy/sy kompetierend sal kan wees!

In die **rehabilitasieproses** is die atleet, afrigter, dokter en fisioterapeut in 'n span saamgesnoer: elkeen moet sy deel bydra om die rehabilitasie so effektief moontlik te maak tot voordeel van die atleet! Almal, maar veral die atleet en afrigter, moet die besering verstaan en betrokke wees by die herstelproses

Gereelde rusperiodes en doeltreffende strekoefeninge voor EN na EN gedurende oefeninge, sal ver gaan om jou atleet gesond en beseringvry te hou!

