

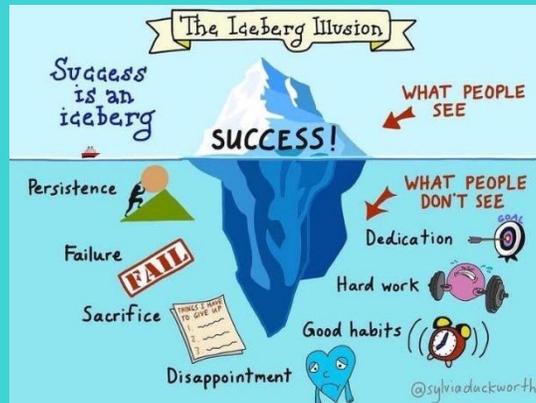


THEME FOR THE MONTH OF September
SACRIFICE
from
VARA Youth Coordinator Alex Krebs



Thanks to this month's theme sponsor

THE SACRIFICES ATHLETES MAKE



Definition of Sacrifice:

the act of giving up something that you want to keep especially in order to get or do something else

"Success is an iceberg" and that is what people see, what they don't see are all the other things that lead to success whether in athletics, school or work. Last month we addressed disappointment, this month we are talking about SACRIFICE.

Athletics takes work and there are many choices that need to be made in order to be SUCCESSFUL. All of the different components involved in participating in athletics, the sacrifices athletes make typically lead to good life skills such as time management, individualism and healthy life choices.

"Being an athlete is a lifestyle that consumes every aspect of your life. Whether you're a professional athlete, recreational athlete or participate in a sport while you're in school, you'll have to make all kinds of sacrifices in order to succeed. It's important to surround yourself with a strong support system -- people who understand your desire to be the best and will support you through thick and thin."-Melodie Anne from LiveStrong.com

Free Time

Performing well as an athlete is an around-the-clock commitment. You may need to choose between time you spend with friends at sleep overs or get together to focus on getting mentally prepared for your next training session, race, game or watching video. Certainly not to say you won't have time for your friends because athletics often help form great life-long friendships but sometimes you may have to make some decisions on when it makes sense to get together with friends.

Diet Choices

Participation in sport requires strong physical fitness and a healthy body. It is extremely important to pay attention to your food choices and have a well-balanced diet with all of the food groups. At races try to bring a healthy lunch so you don't need to buy chicken fingers, hot dogs, french fries etc. at the lodge. None of those food choices will be good sitting in your stomach while you are trying to take your 2nd run! Instead pack lean protein, carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables.

Sleep

Getting the right amount of sleep is just as important as nutrition. Without enough sleep the body is unable to replenish itself both mentally and physically. Your body will be too tired to perform at its best and mentally you may not be able to make the quick decisions you need to make in sports. It is extremely difficult to balance sports, school work, travel and time with family and friends and be able to get the sleep your body needs. Have a fairly consistent sleep pattern.

Taking Time Off

The body can only be asked to do so much, especially for young maturing athletes. It is important to take some "down time" or days off to let your body get ready for the next game/practice/race. A lot of times athletes just want to "go, go, go" but without rest the performance level may plateau or even decrease. It's important to take the right amount of time off after any sort of injury, this certainly includes a concussion. Returning to play too soon can delay recovery, lead to an even more severe injury or a lifelong ailment. After an injury TAKE TIME OFF!

Educational Experience

As stated earlier it can be very difficult to balance athletics and school, especially when you might be missing quite a bit of school for competitions. It is important to foster good working relationships with teachers so when it is time to ask permission to miss class for a sports event they understand you will be keeping up with your school work and are more inclined to allow you to miss school. With the commitment to sports and travel you may miss out on some of the school activities but you will be learning life lessons and meeting friends that will be your "sports" friends for many years.

Financial Sacrifices

Competing as an athlete costs money. From paying for training, races/games, equipment, travel and the list goes on. Athletes should all give their parents a huge THANK YOU for the sacrifices they are making to make it possible for you to compete in sports. Not only the financial sacrifice but the time commitments they make to get you where you need to be on any day. Ski swaps will be starting up in the fall and if you go to the right one they can have really good race gear, speed suits etc. Sometimes the older athletes in your program will have equipment they need to get rid of because they are moving on to another age class. However, before you purchase anything make sure you check with your coach to make sure you have the most recent USSA equipment guidelines and that they help you select the appropriate equipment for your child. You will find the USSA Equipment Guidelines for this coming season on the VARA Youth Coordinator Site, link is below.



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Please visit the [VARA Youth Coordinator Page](#) on the [VARA](#) site.