

Study Guide #11

Resilience: “Bouncing Back Quickly”

Parent & Child Study Guides to Watching a Sports Event

*Association for the Advancement
of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP)*

Watching a sports event can be a valuable learning experience for young people. Within the sporting arena we see both good and poor examples of such topics as: setting and working towards goals, focusing attention, managing emotions, handling disappointment, relating to others, dealing with nervousness, etc.

In order to maximize this learning opportunity, AAASP has developed a series of study guides for parents and children to use while watching a sports event, either in person or on television. Each guide is brief and focused around a limited topic. It suggests certain observations and presents several questions for the parent and child to discuss. The study guide concludes with a brief summary of important facts regarding the topic.

We hope that these guides will promote a healthy dialogue between parents and their children about various issues that athletes face during sporting events, as well as in preparation for competition. Your child doesn't necessarily need to be an athlete to benefit from these discussions, since children experience most of these issues in daily life, such as in school. We hope that this information is helpful to you in promoting healthy ideas about sport, exercise, and human performance in general.

Discussion questions: Resilience: “Bouncing Back Quickly”

While you watch a sports event:

1. Find a few examples of athletes in individual sports that made mistakes during their performances.
2. How did these athletes respond after making these mistakes? How did they perform just after the mistake and/or in later trials or events?
3. Think of a time when you made a mistake. How did you feel? How long did the feeling last? How did that feeling affect you when you tried again?
4. Watch a team sport such as an ice hockey game and identify a point in the game where an obvious rule violation is not called. Focus on those players who are visibly upset about the official's mistake. How do their reactions affect their performances? Are they able to let it go and get back to focusing on the game?
5. While watching a team game, or team effort, notice a team that is behind. How can they “bounce back?” When a team or player bounces back, THAT is called resilience.
6. How do you feel when someone treats you unfairly and gets away with it? What happens to your concentration?
7. When you make a mistake or something doesn't go your way, how quickly do refocus on what you were doing?
8. Does refocusing help your performance?
9. While performing, does focusing on your mistake or the mistakes of others help you perform better? If so, how?

10. If something goes wrong in your performance, what are some ways you can quickly bounce back and perform your best?

Lesson conclusion

Successful athletes understand that things happen during competition that are unplanned. The best response to these situations is to ignore them or quickly refocus on the game and move forward. Sometimes athletes themselves make mistakes. Other times, the environment (snow, ice, or equipment), a competitor, or even an official can knock an athlete off track. Successful athletes do not dwell on these mistakes or mishaps. They quickly refocus on the present and what they need to do next. It is natural to experience immediate negative emotions when something goes wrong; however, resilient athletes do not allow these emotions to linger. Athletes who are not resilient waste valuable energy and focus on things other than the skills they are doing. These athletes often perform poorly. In contrast, resilient athletes limit the effect of adversity on later performances, allowing them to return to performing well. Successful athletes may experience disappointment, anger, or frustration associated with adversity but rather than being overcome by these emotions they find ways to quickly bounce back.

AAASP encourages parents to do their part in creating a supportive youth sport environment so their child will develop a life long interest in physical activity and playing sports. By teaching the fundamentals, you can help your child develop a winning attitude, not only in sports but also throughout his or her life.

About AAASP

Founded in 1986, the Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology (AAASP) promotes the ethical practice, science and advocacy of the psychology of sport, exercise and health. AAASP is the premier international, multidisciplinary sport and exercise psychology organization, and is the only professional organization in North America that offers certification to qualified professionals who practice sport, exercise, and health psychology. For more information on this and other topics, or to find a certified sport psychology consultant in your area, visit <http://www.aaasponline.org>.

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