

Tom Burgdorf's
Parenting A Champion Athlete
And A Mature Young Adult

The Fragile Athlete/Student

Being a fragile athlete/student where external things get in the way of their good performances is a weakness. A weakness is similar to not being as strong as others, not being as fast, or not being as flexible. As always, we want to improve our children to have the best chance to perform/compete well. If a child allows distractions to affect their performance, they need to do something about it.

Life doesn't always give you the same playing field that you have been used to. Sometimes surprises pop up, and you need to "make it happen" even though things are slightly different. The athlete who gets to the competition late, misses warm-up, and now is faced with the start of the competition has a choice, be bothered or get tough and "make it happen." A gymnast can mess up her 1st event of a four event competition, and she walks to the 2nd event with a choice, be bothered by what just happened or attack the 2nd event with a positive attitude and "make it happen."

Too many athletes/students allow themselves to fall down when things are a little unusual. Yes, the wind might be blowing for your baseball game. Guess what? The wind is blowing on the other team too. Yes, the lighting in the competition gym is a little different than what you are used to; get tough. You may have a sore ankle, "make it happen." We are doing a great job of parenting, coaching, and teaching when we educate our kids on the skill of "adapting." Let's change that to "adapting with a good attitude."

"I can't hit because I forgot my \$250 bat says the 7-year-old Little Leaguer." "I don't think I can do a very good beam routine today at the meet because I perform better on blue beams, and this one is brown." "My approach was 1/2 an inch off so I wasn't able to do the vault."

Teaching our kids to think and control their attitudes and emotions when unexpected things happen gives them a valuable tool. If an athlete/student is teetering on a bad performance, let's help them. Talk to your kids about this topic. Then give them some experiences where they can see that they can accomplish things even under unusual circumstances. (Yes, you can eat and enjoy a bowl of ice cream with a fork.) The key, have a "Conversation With Your Kids" on this topic.

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