

Competitive sport is a great way for young men and women to learn about themselves and build skills that will assist them on and off the playing field. Sports can build confidence and self-esteem through discipline, respect, hard work, and by learning to manage stress. This process comes to fruition under the watchful eye of many people in a student-athlete's support system - none more integral than the family who surrounds them. The support system plays a crucial role in the daily development of a student-athlete. When each of the pieces of this system plays their role well, successful and healthy development becomes the result. When the system breaks down and roles become cluttered, the result is not as successful on or off the field of play. The following information is based on years of sport science research. It is meant to provide guidance to parents in order to assist and clarify their integral responsibilities in the development of their student-athlete.

**Support** - As athletes develop throughout the years, they will endure many highs and many lows. Embracing challenge is an integral component to achieving long-term success. Mistakes go hand-in-hand with seeking appropriate challenges. Parents who listen, encourage, show support and display unconditional love through it all create the best environment for their child to continue stretching boundaries and succeed in the long-run.

**Values** - What do you value as a family? Does the message you send on a daily basis (words, actions, celebrations) reflect and reinforce those values? Consistent reminders and displays of family values through thick and thin assist in maintaining a balanced life filled with perspective on and off the field.

**Mastery of Skills over Results** - If immediate results become more important than the long-term growth and development of your student-athlete, short-sighted reactions and unhealthy habits will follow. Student-athletes who strive to embrace challenges and refine their skills build a solid foundation for long-term success. Athletes who are motivated to master skills rather than simply focus on today's scoreboard establish a mindset that will endure the ups and downs of the 10 years and 10,000 hours required to become an expert in any domain.

*Recommended Reading* - **Mindset: The New Psychology of Success** by Carol Dweck, Ph.D.

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