



Athletes strong for Mental Health



Coach recognizing athlete's performance anxiety

Foundation for visualization, mental health techniques laid in preseason

Preseason workouts are pivotal for coaches to establish season expectations. Positive discussions on visualization and mental health techniques during this period can help athletes manage stress and anxiety, ensuring they are mentally prepared for the upcoming season's challenges.

Tips to normalize anxiety

Coaches can help athletes normalize anxiety for high-pressure situations by discussing its commonality in competitive states.

- Introducing high-stakes scenarios in practice, like simulating critical game moments with consequences for mistakes, instills resilience and adaptability.
- Utilizing visualization techniques aid athletes in mentally preparing for such situations while teaching breathing and relaxation methods promote composure under pressure.

These strategies, though not time-intensive, necessitate coaching expertise to implement effectively, fostering athletes' mental fortitude and enhancing their performance readiness for the demanding challenges of the season.



Minimize stress for must-win games



Consistently acknowledging the reality of high-stakes situations and anxiety throughout the preseason and beyond is valuable. Emphasizing energy, effort and executing tasks correctly while managing nerves shifts focus to the process rather than the outcome.

Effectively communicating the importance of both aspects prepares athletes to handle pressure effectively, fostering a balanced approach that promotes success in challenging situations.



Coach roles in preseason conditioning

Noticing an athlete is struggling

When an athlete struggles, coaches can ask open-ended questions like, "Can you share some concerns you're experiencing?" Encouraging athletes to open up about their anxiety helps coaches gain insight into how to address it effectively, fostering a supportive environment conducive to the athlete's well-being and performance.

Dealing with a coach's anxiety

Like athletes, coaches must identify the source of anxiety.

Step two involves acknowledging anxiety in the moment, normalizing it and recognizing the challenge. By centering the mind and body, coaches can redirect focus to the task at hand, such as coaching, effectively managing anxiety and optimizing performance in high-pressure situations.



Physical aspects of anxiety

Coaches should recognize physical signs of anxiety, such as increased heart rate and blood pressure, in themselves before taking the sidelines, such as increased heart rate and blood pressure, and consider factors like caffeine or tobacco use.

To manage anxiety, coaches can slow down their breathing deliberately. Coaches must model desired behavior, as their energy impacts team atmosphere; a centered, controlled approach fosters a positive environment, contrasting with an overly hyped demeanor that may induce anxiety.

Coaches should align their coaching style with maintaining a calm and engaged presence.