

VIEWPOINTS

Good habits now help achieve success later

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As the season comes to a start for schools located in the South and out West, and teams from the North are walking to an indoor practice in the cold weather, it is important to remember that the habits you develop as a student-athlete shape you. Habits, especially ones maintained during pre-season, will create the contours for the season and lead to the correct result.

“Habits are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit”—Aristotle

Aristotle was a towering Greek philosopher and teacher born thousands of years ago, who taught, among other things, the development of habits and how they intertwined with moral fiber and character. He was known as one of the first teachers of the West.

By Aristotle’s ideas and wisdom, we learn that habits are a key force and foundation of the development of human character. Thousands of years ago, the learned scholar spoke about habits and the creation of the evolution of how humans will behave.

Since then, we have dissected habits and its paradigm of results when shaped properly and improperly.

In understanding habits, this article aims to shine a light on this word and allow it to cultivate good thinking and inspire you to incorporate it into daily life. In the end, it may be as simple as this: Good habits lead to good results and bad habits will, undoubtedly, lead to poor results.

Practice good habits

In a game where monotony is vitally important, yet can become frustrating and boring, one must remember that a consistent pattern of behavior is habit forming.

The same way that you consistently

do a drill, repeatedly take batting practice or work your arsenal of pitches is the same way that habits get formed. The most crucial element of habits is the formation of good ones.

As one of my mentors, the late Dick Smith (a longtime coach and Fastpitch Delivery contributor) used to say, “don’t practice errors.” Those three simple words were as profound as the speaker who delivered them. Practicing errors will lead to bad habits, which in turn will lead to a poor result during games.

Sometimes players go through the motions and do their daily drills for the sole purpose of getting them done. This habit-forming exercise will, in my opinion, lead to ineffective results. There is no doubt that simply doing drills to get them done will lead to poor habits, which will permeate other aspects of your student-athlete life.

Instead, make sure to do those drills properly to create a consistent pattern of good habits. Practicing good habits trains the mind and trains the muscles to remember. It’s that simple.

Practicing bad habits, or doing your drills quickly and improperly to get them done, will create that same muscle memory. But that same muscle memory will lead to ineffective results at game time.

Sometimes athletes tell me they don’t understand why they consistently make the same mistake on the field, like overthrowing a ball or getting jammed on an inside pitch.

Most of the time, I can relate the failure situation to the creation of a poor habit. The throwing arm was in the wrong slot because when the drill was practiced, it was in the correct slot only some of the time, rather than all the time. This leads to muscle memory and a mind that delivers the arm slot in the wrong position in a fast-paced game, because the habit was not properly solidified.

How do you create good habits?

Creating good habits and

eliminating bad habits starts with something as simple as showing up to practice on time, eating the right food and dressing for practice prepared. Many have heard that John Wooden, one of the greatest coaches of all time, would show his team how to put on their socks.

This methodical approach of putting the sock on properly, with the pinky toe being snugged and comfortable and then tying the laces, was creating a habit for his players. Some may say this was elementary, but I believe he instilled — in that one instant — the creation of good habits, and an explanation that there is no little ingredient that should be ignored.

If you want to win a championship, then do things champions do. If you want to be successful in business, then emulate things that successful businesspeople do. If you want to get good grades, then learn good study skills and identify the key ingredients to good grades.

The force of nature and gravitational pull of the habits you create will mold your character into effective results. And when an entire team creates good habits, great things are bound to occur.

Like attracts like, and surrounding yourself with good habits and teammates who emulate good habits will lead to excellence. As Aristotle stated thousands of years ago, excellence is not an act, but rather a habit.

Good habits lead to excellent results

There has never been greatness or excellence without the foundation of good habits. Good habits are at the core of that achievement. They are the pillars and foundation of the building blocks that create a great athlete and a team that achieves excellence.

Good habits are very important and powerful factors in our lives. Repeatedly, they create an unconscious and consistent pattern



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that eventually expresses our character and allows us to achieve an effective result. Habits also have a contagious effect on teams.

Teammates who practice good habits usually create an environment of excellence whereby the team looks to consistently emulate those good habits. There is a force and pull of nature when habits are created around us that travels throughout a team.

On the other hand, practicing bad habits or not being conscious of the habits that are forming can lead to frustrating and poor results.

As you embrace the season before you, remember that establishing good habits now, and consistently performing those routines daily properly, will lead to good results. In the end, we all seek greatness and excellence. To accomplish that, you must create good habits.

When the mind and body become one, good habits lead to effective results and excellence.