

## **RISING TO THE CALL TAKES CHARACTER AND VIRTUE**

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There are traditions and rituals in all cultures. Tradition does not ensure victory, but they are good reminders that something important is happening. Recently at the annual National Football League conference, commissioner Roger Goodell proclaimed that we in sport are in the “bonding “ business. We all connect through sport at some level. The 2015 Superbowl television viewership broke records at an astounding 114.4 million viewers, becoming the most watched sport event in television history.

Living by the credo of “faith, family, football is the perspective in sport we should strive to achieve. Enriching our youths lives with dialogue through a quiet strength by improving the education and care of athletes and coaches. My sport consulting firm mentors pro and college athletes, the reality is coaches and athletes are a tight-knit culture, similar to a fraternity, with entrenched hierarchies and a fierce sense of loyalty among team members. We are ingrained into protecting these athletes and coaches. Happiness and success in sport begins where selfishness ends.

A great coach is someone who can give correction without causing resentment. Statistics show coaches are the figure of prominence in athletes lives fulfilled through the relationship from recruitment to retirement. Research show that coaches that attend clinics, programs, seminars and are engaged in pastoral training lead lives with less “burn out” and have life longevity.

Complete and total loyalty, work ethic, organizational skills, discipline, integrity and fortitude are all necessary tools that coaches must have to succeed. Coaches need to develop strong relationships with parents, and hold parents accountable for the athlete’s faith formation. Studies have shown the emotional damage of parental unrealistic expectation our challenge is to shine a bright light on these problems that exists in the shadows of a very dark place. Failure on the scoreboard is not fatal, but to change the culture of character and virtue is of the utmost importance.

During a Senate Commerce Committee hearing in the United State in December of 2014 lawmakers, and representatives from the National Football League, Major League Baseball, National Hockey League, and their player unions met on matters such as domestic violence. A former player and presently an NFL executive delivered a personal and emotional testimony about domestic violence in his home as a child. The initiative for the 2015-2016 upcoming season for the National Football League is “Character and Virtue in Sport”. This is creating another abandoned and isolated human group, the spouse, significant other and family members of the athlete.

Sport communication plays a vital role within the platform of evangelization of the athlete and coach. The immediacy provided by the social media is available to predators. Athletic programs now use blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and many other programs to keep up with their fans and players. The devastation of an online attack on an athlete can lead to deep scars and has been documented in several well-publicized cases. The danger makes it difficult for us to distinguish between the meaningful relationships we foster in the real world and the relationships formed through social media. This aggressive style of reporting is worldwide and tags the athlete as leaders in sport reporting but can come with an extremely high personal privacy risk.

We are missing the framework for coaches that exhibit effective, coaching techniques, spirituality, and moral development. As St Therese demonstrated, its in the little details, a small kind jester of kindness and compassion in a fierce competition is huge in they eye of the beholder. Let us globally answer this call of character and virtue in sport and work together united in Christ.