



Don't make it easy on your kid



Let's face it—being a high-performance sport parent is **HARD**.

It can be difficult to watch your athlete when they're battling for first place, and it can be difficult to watch them struggle and feel like nothing is going right. It's human nature to want to protect your athlete so they don't have to experience the hardest parts of striving in a sport they love. Not to mention the feelings of guilt and worry that might come up for some parents: thoughts like 'Why should my child struggle if they don't have to?' or 'I'm a bad parent if I make them figure it out on their own'. You might feel like struggle means they won't be able to make it through, or they will lose their chance if it looks like this stuff doesn't come easy to them... but what if jumping in and avoiding the hurt is actually taking away a valuable opportunity for your athlete?

When we think about preparing athletes for the next level, it's not just the swing and technique that matters, it's also about their ability to control their emotions, recover from mistakes and manage tough moments. It's also important that they can be self-reliant and manage adversity. Self-reliance (or the ability to depend on oneself) is best developed when individuals are in a safe and secure environment. They know that they can go out and do hard things, struggle, fail and try again AND that there is a secure base to return to no matter how it goes. By encouraging your child to work through tough stuff (while also being there to support if and when they need it) you will help your athlete build confidence in themselves and their abilities.

Help your athlete create these habits now, so no matter what comes up along the road in sport or life, they feel able to take it on.

“Bubble wrapping and making things simple as they're growing up—that's not really an advantage for kids who want to be high level golfers because of all the toughness and adversity that's required to make it as a PGA/LPGA tour player.”

Derek Ingram, Head Coach Team Canada - Men and PGA TOUR Coach

SCORECARD

If you're looking for ways to support your athlete while they're going through something rough, here are some ways you can show your support while they work through the challenge:

Link the situation back to their values

“You've told me before that ___ is really important to you.”

Look for hidden opportunities for future growth

“I hear you that it's tough right now. I can only imagine that working through this right now will be helpful practice for when you're having a tough day in an important tournament.”

Look for positives/strengths

Highlight what is great about them on and off the course, or how they've handled tough stuff in the past.

Re-orient to the controllables

“We can't control X, but what about the situation do you think you can focus on instead?”

You can acknowledge that you don't have all the answers...and that you're willing to help them figure it out- if they want your help on it. Plan a time to follow-up, work through or discuss again, if needed.

FOLLOW THROUGH

Think of a time when your athlete struggled (in golf or outside of it). Do you remember how you felt? What thoughts came up for you? How did you respond? If you had a chance for a do-over, would you do anything differently?

If you tend to have the urge to jump in and fix the issue, how can you work on pausing and holding off so that your athlete has time and space to figure things out on their own?