

Redefining Success Worksheet for Coaches

Success in sport is often defined by winning outcomes, and while winning is certainly an important aspect of sport, there are many small victories between championships. When an athlete feels they have control over their ability to achieve success, their confidence will increase. Controllable sources of confidence are the parts of performance that the athlete has the ability to personally change, such as their intensity in practice, skill mastery, and motivation. Uncontrollable sources of confidence are parts of performance that athletes may have no direct ability to change, such as the outcome of games or skill level of opponents. As much as coaches wish it was, winning is not a controllable factor of sport, so, to provide a controllable source of confidence, coaches must redefine their definition of success when working with athletes. How an athlete perceives their coaches' standard for success can have a big impact on their self-confidence (Machida et al., 2012). For example, if an athlete has lost their last three games and feels their coach only cares about how many wins they have, their self-confidence can severely decline, and symptoms of pre-performance anxiety can arise as a result. Creating an environment in which success is defined by technique, improvement, and effort can help athletes maintain their sense of confidence, as these are things athletes have the ability to control. Below are some of the alternative ways success in sport can be defined.

There are lots of ways an athlete can be successful - winning isn't everything! Below are some alternative ways an athlete can succeed

Demonstrating humility

Mastering a new skill

Displaying motivation and drive

Providing support to teammates

Displaying leadership skills

Showing self-discipline

Reframing negative thoughts

Enjoying the environment they're performing in

Feeling mentally prepared

Improving performance of skills

Showing competitive spirit

Showing passion

Demonstrating resiliency

Displaying commitment

Feeling comfortable to try something new in training or practice

Feeling physically prepared

Maintaining focus during training session, practice, or game

Believing in their abilities

Once you have found some factors you would like to use to define success, you should share them with your athlete(s). Below are a few ways to share this information with athletes:

- Have a meeting to discuss your expectations and ideas of what success looks like. If you want to turn this into a group activity, check out the [*Success in Sport Activity Planner*](#)
- Provide athletes and/or parents with a copy of our [*Success in Sport Infographic for Athletes*](#), which can be emailed, printed, or hung up in a team space
- Incorporate your definition of success into your team or program's code of conduct
- Praise athletes when they achieve something that fits your definition of success (e.g., improving a skill, demonstrating resiliency)

How do you plan to share your definition of success with your athlete(s)?
