

## MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD COACH

A new season is a new opportunity to dedicate yourself to the task at hand. And, that task is to become the best athlete that you can. You do this by obeying just two simple rules: Always Give Your Best Effort, and NEVER GIVE UP!

Rule number one means the following. You work hard every day. You always remember to bring your clothes, your shoes, and any other necessary equipment. You avoid heavy lunches that may affect your ability to finish the workout. You budget your time wisely to make sure you get enough sleep every night, especially before the big meets. You are mentally strong enough to resist the peer pressure that can lead to drinking or drug use at parties that can affect your ability to perform. And, in the meets, you always think positively about your potential to perform.

You avoid excessive complaining on the day of a meet about your physical problems, real or imagined. The person that does this is simply preparing their excuse for losing. They don't realize that a person can win a race and be a loser, while another can finish last and be a winner. How is this so? A loser is someone who doesn't do their best. Sometimes they have great physical talent, but they will not work to develop it to its fullest potential. These people are to be pitied. Remember, when they complain, they're just "buying insurance". The more and louder they complain and let you know how much pain they're in, the bigger the insurance policy against losing. This is mental weakness. Avoid it.

The second rule is NEVER GIVE UP. This is the harder of the two. And, it is possible that we will never know if you do give up. Because giving up is a mental thing. It is the moment you decide to not push your opponent. It is the moment you back off in a race. It is the moment you decide you cannot beat that other person. It is when you decide you just don't care anymore.

Giving up is a disease. Do it once, and it's easier next time. And, sometimes it is so desirable and easy to do. That's why it can be so deadly to an athlete. You fight it by Rule #1. Make a commitment to always finish a workout, no matter what. Make a commitment to always push an opponent, no matter how big a lead they have. Make a commitment to always do the things that will allow you to do your best, no matter the sacrifice. And, make a commitment to Never think negatively about your chances, no matter what the reality may be.

The best athletes in every sport always have one thing in common. They are mentally tough. They may be different physically, but mentally they are tough. They are the types who have to be kicked out of practice because they're doing TOO much! We have athletes like this. Emulate them and you will have a good season.

Finally, some coaches think your toughest opponent is the stopwatch, because it never slows down, or the tape measure, because it never shrinks. I see their point, but I believe your toughest opponent is a person you already know. They are your best friend. You know everything about this opponent. You grew up with this opponent. You can't lie to or fool this opponent, because your toughest opponent is YOU!.

