

BUILDING
RESILIENCE,
CONFIDENCE &
FOCUS

Parent

Guide

ACCESS  HUMAN
P O T E N T I A L



Hello!

Welcome to “A Parent’s Guild to Building Resilience, Confidence and Focus” for your Student-Athlete’s Mental Game.

Every young athlete faces ups and downs—wins, losses, pressure, and high expectations. As a parent, you play a vital role in shaping your child’s mental approach to sports, helping them grow not just as players, but as confident, resilient, and focused individuals.

This guide is designed to equip you with practical strategies to support your child’s mental game. From understanding the emotional side of sports, to strengthening communication, handling setbacks, and preparing mentally for competition—you’ll gain tools to help your child thrive on and off the field.

Whether they’re facing pressure or bouncing back from a tough loss, you’ll be ready to guide them with confidence.

Kelly Oberse

Mental Performance Consultant
www.accesshumanpotential.com

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Each section includes parent guidance, practical tools, and a journal page for reflection and action.




1. Understanding the Mental Side of Sports

Athletes' performance is not just physical—it's mental and emotional. A strong mindset helps them navigate competition, setbacks, and pressure. As a parent, you play a critical role in shaping their mental agility, self-belief, and ability to recover from challenges.

Key Mental Skills Parents Can Support:

-  **Growth Mindset** – Encouraging effort over results and learning from mistakes
-  **Resilience** – Helping them handle setbacks and bounce back stronger
-  **Focus & Composure** – Supporting concentration and emotional control
-  **Self-Talk & Confidence** – Teaching them how to reframe negative thoughts

Parent Tools for Mental Strength:

-  **"Effort Over Outcome" Praise:** Reinforce progress, hard work, and commitment instead of focusing on wins/losses.
-  **Mindset Shift Language: Change** "I can't do this" to "I'm improving every day."
-  **Post-Game Reframe:** Ask, "What went well today?" instead of "Did you win?"

Journal Page: Your Role in Their Mental Game

What do you notice about how your child handles competition?

How do they talk about themselves after a good or bad performance?

What's one way you can help strengthen their mental game this week?

2. Communicate for Confidence & Growth

Your words matter. The way you support, motivate, & react to wins and losses shapes your child's confidence and mental resilience.

DO:

 Praise effort over results (“You worked hard today - I love seeing your effort.”)

 Ask growth-oriented questions (“What did you learn today?”)

 Encourage positive self-talk (“You’ve put in the work - trust yourself out there.”)

DON'T:


X Criticize mistakes harshly


X Focus only on winning or statistics


X Compare them to other athletes

NOTE: You can ask your child if they want to discuss the game/competition, but if they say no, respect that & wait until emotions have calmed down.

Parent Tools for Effective Communication:

 **The “Three Positives” Approach:** Before giving feedback, highlight three things they did well.

 **Listening First:** Ask, “How did you feel about your game today?” instead of assuming what they're thinking.

 **Encouragement vs. Pressure:** Say, “I love watching you play” rather than “You need to win today.”

Journal Page: Conversations That Build Confidence

How do you typically encourage your child after a tough game?


What's one phrase you can use to reinforce their effort over results?


How can you adjust your post-game conversations to be more supportive?


3. Help Your Child Handle Pressure & Setbacks

Every athlete experiences moments of pressure, failure, and frustration. How they respond to these challenges can determine long-term success.


Tips for Parents:


 **Normalize Pressure** - “Feeling nervous means you care - it’s a normal part of competing.”


 **Teach Recovery Skills** - Help your child reset after a loss with reflection rather than frustration.

 **Model Composure** - Your reactions influence how your child handles setbacks. Stay calm and positive!

Parent Tools for Handling Pressure:

 **Breathing Techniques** - Start with you, conscious breathing - inhale through nose, diaphragm expanding, long exhale to slow heart rate & lower stress. You can do this with your child to lower stress before competition.

 **The “Win or Learn” Perspective:** Help them & you see failures as learning opportunities. Failure is feedback & allows room for growth.

 **Reset Routine:** When overwhelmed, take a breath, have a physical cue & say a mantra or affirmation to get you refocused.

Journal Page: Navigating Pressure & Setbacks

How does your child typically react to pressure in sports?




What small adjustment can help them manage emotions better under pressure?

How can you model calm & confidence during stressful moments?




4. Strengthening Resilience & Bouncing Back

Athletes will make mistakes. How they recover from those moments shapes their long-term success. Your support helps them build resilience & view setbacks as learning opportunities.

Tips for Parents:

-  **Praise persistence, not perfection:** Reinforce effort & growth rather than flawless performances.
-  **Ask growth questions after setbacks:** “What did you learn today?” instead of “Why didn’t you win?”
-  **Remind them of past comebacks:** Help them see progress over time.

Parent Tools for Resilience:

-  **The “Next Play” Mentality:** Help them focus on moving forward, not dwelling on mistakes.
-  **Encouraging Grit:** Reinforce that setbacks are temporary & part of growth.
-  **Small Wins Reflections:** Have them identify a success from every practice or game.

Journal Page: Strengthening Resilience Together

What message do you want your child to hear after a tough game?




How can you encourage them to learn from mistakes instead of fearing them?

What's one strategy to help them bounce back mentally after a setback?




5. Focus & Mental Preparation for Competition

Athletes perform their best when mentally prepared. Help your child develop a consistent focus routine before games, practices, or high-pressure moments.

Tips for Parents:

-  **Encourage visualization:** Have them picture success before competing.
-  **Teach breathing techniques:** Focused breathing - longer exhale to slow heart rate.
-  **Use pre-game encouragement:** Reinforce their preparation, not just performance expectations.

Parent Tools for Focus & Preparation:

-  **Visualization Routine:** Schedule routine around visualization - during the week & pre-competition*
-  **Breathing Techniques:** Focused breathing - long exhale slows heart rate, longer inhale speeds up heart rate. *
-  **Pre-Game Encouragement:** Reinforce their preparation rather than the pressure to perform - process based, not outcome based.

*Please contact us to get our guides on visualization and/or breathing techniques for optimal performance.

Journal Page: Supporting Pre-Game Focus

What helps your child feel mentally ready before competing?

How can you adjust your encouragement to reduce pressure & increase focus?

What small routine or message can help them feel calm & confident?

Summary

Summary: Key Parent Strategies for Supporting a Strong Mental Game



Encourage a Growth Mindset: Focus on effort, learning & progress.



Reinforce Positive Self-Talk: Help them build confidence through their inner dialogue.



Model Emotional Control: Stay calm & supportive in all situations.



Teach Recovery & Resilience: Normalize setbacks & help them bounce back stronger.



Support Mental Preparation: Help them develop focus strategies before competition.





Supporting your child's athletic journey is about more than showing up on game day—it's about helping them grow mentally, emotionally, and personally through sport. By understanding the mental side of the game, communicating with intention, and guiding them through pressure and setbacks, you've laid the foundation for lifelong confidence and resilience.

Remember, your influence matters. The calm, encouraging, and steady support you provide teaches your child how to handle adversity, focus under pressure, & believe in themselves. Keep showing up—not just in the stands, but in the conversations, the challenges, & the quiet moments that shape who they're becoming. You're not just raising an athlete—you're raising a strong, self-assured young person ready to take on whatever comes next.

Thank-you!

This guide is just the beginning. Want to build on this progress?

Explore our full lineup of follow-up support:

-  **1:1 Coaching** – Personalized mental performance training for student-athletes
-  **Team Workshops** – Build trust, communication, & game-ready mindsets
-  **Programs for Parents** – Learn how to support your athlete without adding pressure
-  **Coach Training** – Tools to lead mentally strong teams & build a championship culture

Let's keep the momentum going.

Schedule an introductory call: <https://calendly.com/koberle-1/discovery>

Contact: www.accesshumanpotential.com
koberle@accesshumanpotential.com