

Final Thought...

This year's final thought was prepared on Saturday afternoon while the campers still have about ½ a day to go...all that's left is the afternoon pit session, third round of games, closing and finals.

Each year I come into this camp thinking how can we improve on the last, how can we raise the bar, where's the standard level??? And each year at the conclusion of the camp, when I look back I am always shocked. This year was no exception. The officials have stepped up to the challenge and spent the last four days in what has become an intense training week. This year the bar was raised in the fitness aspect of the training...two more hours of ice was added for a total of ten hours (prior to the games), an hour a day of fitness consisting of weight training, cardio training and plyometrics. Add the off-ice and on-ice fitness testing to this, then the games, all the officials have conducted themselves with passion and heart.

As I walk around the rink, I observe several worn out faces, but in the midst of the clouds, smiles from ear to ear. Something else that I have never seen before in a camp is that all these “young,” in shape officials, use more sore muscle gels and creams, softballs, rolling pads, etc to work out their muscles...but NOT one of them complained about the program!!! I am very proud of each and every one of them.

The staff finally sees a light at the end of the tunnel (and its not the headlamp of an oncoming train) with regard to the daily schedule. The hardest part of the camp for the staff is rapidly approaching and that is to make the final selections and rank the officials. That will take everyone through Sunday morning and the completion of the finals and the camp. A long 4 ½ days for the campers, which equates to approximately 70 hours of instruction.

The last four and a half days resulted in a group of officials coming together from all areas of the District to accomplish a common goal – to improve their officiating skills. As is the case in every camp I've had the honor of running, the bonding experience was visually evident with the result – a core group of officials that now understand that a support system is the key to success!

Keep in mind that no matter how hard we try, we will make mistakes. But if you learn from those mistakes, you have won half the battle. Some things to remember as you embark on setting yourself free from the cycle of repeativity (I know, I made it up, but it is a good one,) repeating the activity with fruitless outcomes = repeativity.

- Don't place so much concern on what others think of you, your goals, or what you are doing to better yourself. The person's opinion that matters most, is the one staring back at you in the mirror. When your day is over, you have to be happy with what you accomplished. If you can live with your choices, have no regrets, or if you learn from the choices you make, then you will benefit positively.
- Don't hold grudges. When faced with negativity, just move on.
- If you have an opinion, make sure it's the result of a lucid thought. Don't be so quick to jump into a conversation and give your opinion on something if you haven't thoroughly thought it through.

- Life is all about choices. When you wake in the morning, you choose to be in a good mood or a bad mood. Whenever something bad happens in your life, you choose to be a victim or to learn from the bad experience. Your attitude toward life and how you handle the trials and tribulations is everything.
- Choose to be happy from this very moment. Happiness is the end result of certain thoughts and activities, which actually bring about a chemical reaction in your body. This reaction is a euphoria that, while elusive to some, is totally under your control.

As an official, prepare for the naysayers and the haters. These are the people in your life that love to see you fail. This is a facet of human nature that is hard to understand. Why would anyone want to stop someone else from being successful? The answer is simple. This exposes their own failures and shortcomings. It is not that they don't believe in you – they just don't have enough belief in themselves. They judge you based on their own abilities. But rather than get discouraged and defeated, you can use their unbelief to spur you on and push you forward.

To be successful, you must decide exactly what you want to accomplish; then resolve to pay the price to get it! But remember, in the business world, everyone is paid 2 coins: cash & experience. Take the experience first, the cash will come later. I say this because, the only place you find success before work is in the dictionary! So, start building a fire. Prepare your wood, add fuel every day when you train, then when the time is right, light a match.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the entire staff of the District Select Camp. Your dedication to the program, to preparing and delivering instruction above and beyond the norm is an example of your love for the program. Believe it or not, it's the little things like this mean a lot to some people. THANK YOU ALL for your support.

With that in mind, I will leave you with this, “for those of you with unanswered dreams, set some guidelines and go out and achieve your goals. The road to success starts with the very first step. I hope to hear from each of you in the future and learn about your accomplishments.”

Sincerely,

Michael Catalano

DSC Director