

Track Parents and Student-Athletes

How to make the Transition from
High School to College
Successfully

- How many footlocker national champions have ever been NCAA Champions in CC?
- How many high school All-Americans become college All-Americans?
- How many walk-ons/small scholarship kids become All-Americans?

• WHY???????



OVERVIEW

- What are the issues in the transition to college that make it challenging for parents and student-athletes?
- Why do talented kids fail at the college level?
- Why do “average” high school kids succeed?
- Solutions/Ideas
- Practical Applications



What are the Issues?

“LIFE....

Is what happens when you have
other things planned.”

What are the Issues?

“HYPE”

- Nike Nationals, Footlocker, New Balance
- Year Round Training/Specialization
- LetsRun, MileSplit, FloTrack, Twitter, Facebook
- SPITTERS! 😊
- “Full Scholarships”



What are the Issues?

• EXPECTATIONS

• Parent's Expectations

- Many want “Guarantees” (If my kid runs for you they will for sure be an All-American etc.)

• H.S. Coaches Expectations/perceptions

• Student-Athlete's Expectations

- Constantly comparing to who they used to be
- Constantly using the term “I should be....”
- Constantly comparing to others “In high school I ran faster than her, so now if she's beating me I must be a failure...”
- “FOCUS ON YOUR OWN MAT”

What are the Issues?

- “ENTITLEMENT”

- “I deserve a full scholarship because I won 4 state titles”
- “I deserve to travel to meets because I PR’d in my last race”
- “My child should travel because she is a senior and she works really hard”

What are the Issues?

- Reality of “Levels”
 - Conference differences
 - Understanding why some schools will offer a full and some schools will ask you to walk-on
- Reality of Track/CC vs. other sports
 - Head count sports vs. Equivalency Sports

What are the Issues?

- Parent's want a guaranteed contract, not for their kids to have to earn it!
- Helicopter Parents
- Kids start college without ever having learned to fail and pick themselves back up
- See Articles “A Nation of Wimps” and “Allow your Child to Fail if you want them to Succeed”

Why do Talented Kids Fail?

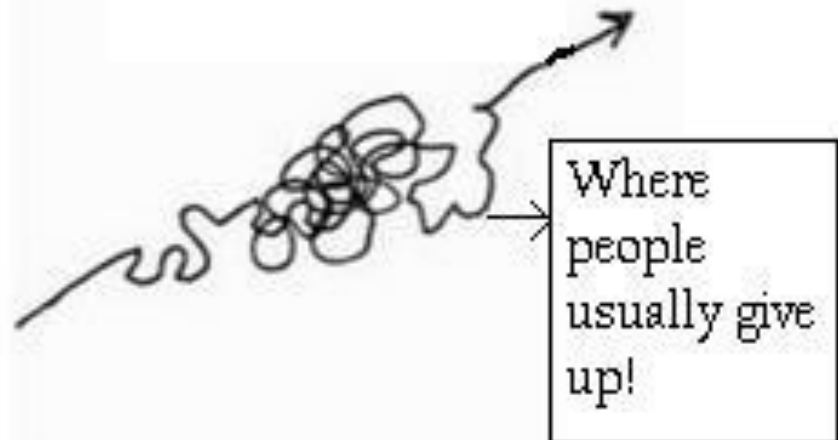
- Hometown/state pressures (especially when they stay in-state)
- Perceived/actual pressure from home.
- They “Love to Win” Don’t “Hate to Lose” or “Love to Run”
- Managing constant chatter from “spitters”
- Too sheltered in High School, then college is too many adjustments
- Not prepared or able to handle life away from their “routine”

Success



What people think
it looks like...

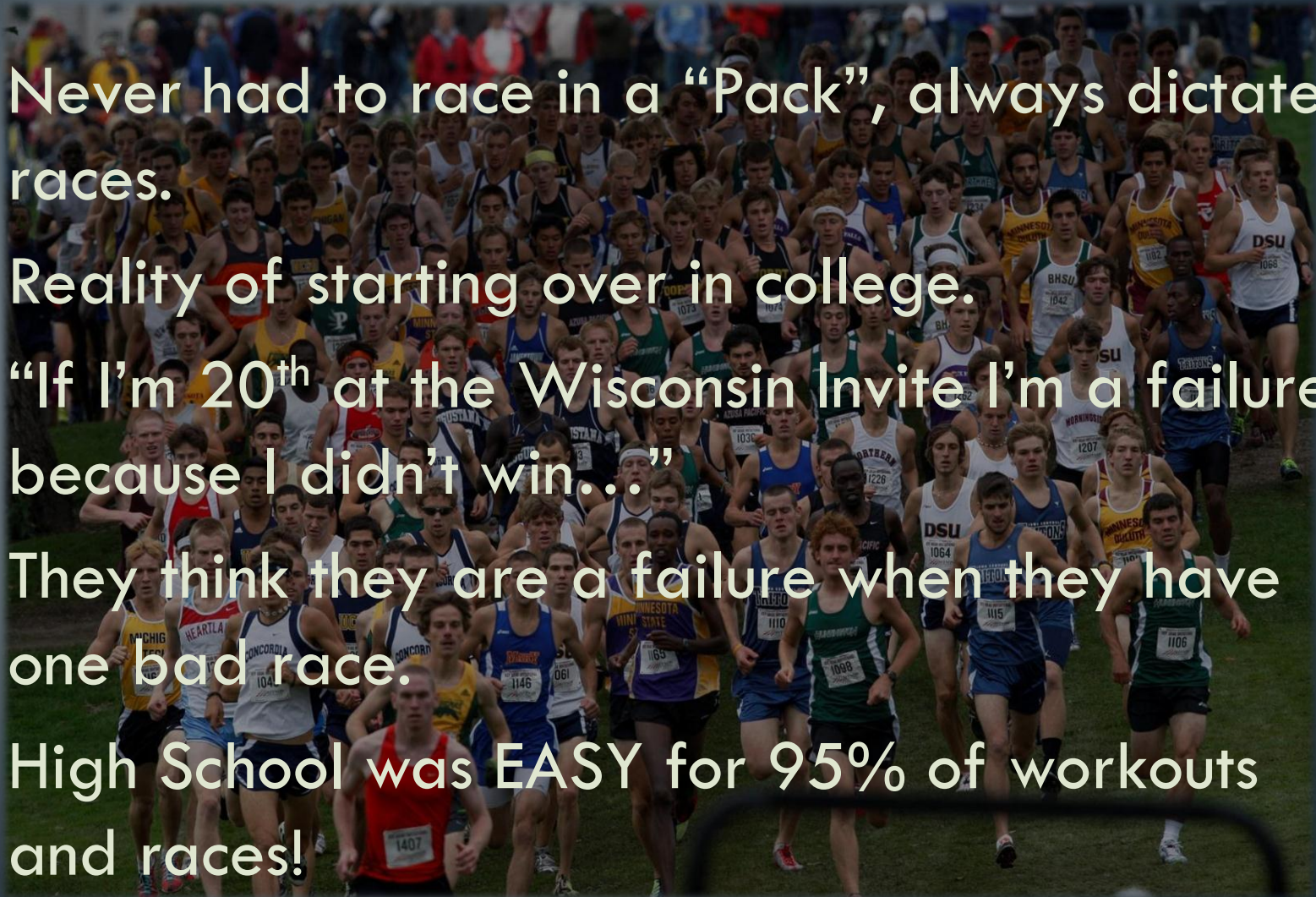
Success



What it REALLY
looks like...

Why do Talented Kids Fail?

- Never had to race in a “Pack”, always dictated races.
- Reality of starting over in college.
- “If I’m 20th at the Wisconsin Invite I’m a failure because I didn’t win...”
- They think they are a failure when they have one bad race.
- High School was EASY for 95% of workouts and races!





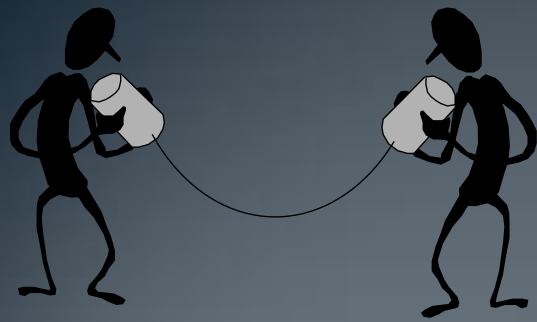
Why do “Average” Kids Succeed?

They don't expect themselves to come in and be the best right away.

- They didn't win all the time in high school, so they don't expect it in college.
- They are used to running in a pack with others dictating the race.
- Laura Docherty “I was never 9th in the state and now I am 9th in the Big Ten CC!”
- Middle of the totem pole is comfortable, just in a bigger totum pole.

Why do Average Kids Succeed?

- They really love to run and compete or they would have quit a long time ago!
- No perceived or actual pressure of a “full ride” or even a small scholarship. Everything they accomplish is a “bonus”.
- Usually, have fewer “outsiders” invested in them
(Ann)
- Have failed before and know how to pick themselves back up!



“Solutions”

- EDUCATING EVERYONE INVOLVED ALL THE TIME!
 - During the recruiting process...managing expectations.
 - During freshman year especially...they are all FRESHMEN even the really good ones!
 - What you did in high school was GREAT, but now you are in college...no good can come from looking in the rearview mirror!
 - What you did to be successful in high school may not be the same as what you need to do to be successful in college!
- Constant Communication with athletes AND parents.
- Showing them the reality...you are getting better, you are just comparing yourself to the best of the best every day.

“Solutions”

- Teaching athletes how to have open dialogues with their parents about their wants/needs/goals and their **NEW** lives!
- Diane and Marty “You expect me to...”
- Tracey and Mardi “My goals are different than your goals for me...”
- Some kids have to be **empowered** to express their opinions when they differ from their parents.
- Learning how to handle a parent that is a bully



“Solutions”

- Coaches, Parents and Athletes REALLY understanding all the transitions that are taking place...
 - School
 - Dorm Life
 - Nutrition
 - Sleep
 - Walking Around a big campus
 - Going from no freedom to LOTS of freedom!
 - Social life...parties, drinking, opposite sex etc.



BASICALLY EVERY ELEMENT OF DAILY LIFE!

Practical Applications

- Setting the Tone early with athletes and parents
- Parent Handbook (Scott Christensen, Stillwater HS)
- Training Diary
- Policy Sheet
- What are “YOUR” goals and what do “YOU” want to get out of this experience and WHY??
- Zone of Discipline
- Handouts to Parents
- E-mails to Parents (Ships on the Shore)
- “We will treat your daughter/son like our child”

Practical Applications

- Start in the recruiting process:
 - Agent Parents
 - Kids that don't love to run
 - Too many in the “entourage”



“WE ARE
EDUCATORS, BUT YOU CANNOT
UNDO 18 YEARS OF BAD
PARENTING!!”