# JUNIOR SPORT

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Athletes taking part in the Gold Coast Academy of Sport's netball program. Picture: Supplied

GCAS GOLD COAST ACADEMY OF SPORT

# STRESS COMES WITH SPORT

## Dealing with disappointment important for young athlete

THE start of every year brings with it school, study and sport. At present, there seems to be trials for many different sports. Trials to make teams can be both stressful for child and parent. There can be celebration and disappointment. As a parent, how do you deal with this?

When it comes to talented young athletes, there is one commonly asked question and that is about 'talent'. Debated for years, the question is: is it 'nature' or 'nurture'? Are athletes who become sporting champions made, or are they a product of nurture and environment?

In my opinion, the answer is: there is no one correct answer. It can be either or a combination of both.

The Academy has had a longstanding relationship with the Carbine Club of Queensland. In previous years we have offered an athlete on the coast a scholarship to help with their sporting dreams. Last year, this scholarship was awarded to Emelia Surch who went on to represent Australia at the World Junior Track and Field Championships in Columbia where she finished fourth in the Long Jump with a personal best jump of 6.45m.

This year, the Carbine Club in partnership with GCAS is pleased to offer two scholarships to the value of $2000 each to help junior athletes. They have recognised the importance of sport in young people's lives and the dreams they have to represent their country in the future. With the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Brisbane, the potential to have athletes from the Gold Coast competing can be helped through funding. If you are interested in applying, go to the website www.goldsport.com.au or contact us to inquire.

Over the past few years the Gold Coast Academy of Sport has had the opportunity to help both types of athletes, the natural talent and the athlete who has to work hard for the success they achieve. Programs have covered how the athlete can approach their training and competition through correct nutrition, thinking (sports psychology), strength and conditioning, recovery and rehab and many other areas of preparation.

> **Are athletes who become sporting champions made, or are they a product of nurture and environment?**

At present, the Academy has programs of rugby union, rugby league refereeing, senior netball, girls basketball, GCAS Future Stars and Upper Coomera State College Future Stars programs. At the start of the school holidays we will be conducting some sprint clinics for athletes of any sport and coming up to the next few months, programs we have on offer are weightlifting and junior netball. If you have any queries about these, please do not hesitate to contact us. (www.goldsport.com.au)

As a coach, mother and administrator, I know that we can all make a difference in an athlete's life and training. We need to be aware, and know why we do what we do and how we do it and when we should prescribe certain training. It is not a matter of doing something because everyone else is doing it. That is not good enough. You need to understand the goals of the athlete and then prepare them to thrive in a competitive arena and not chase artificial figures in the weight room or on the training pitch. All elements of training must compliment other areas and lead the athlete towards their ultimate goal of improving performance. It is plain and simple. Do not look at others to find that golden nugget. Know the strengths and weaknesses of the athlete and work to develop and maintain them.

I know how important it is to see your child or athletes under your tutelage improve. You move through all the ups and downs of training and competition, feel the pressure they place on themselves to perform and try to be there to celebrate or pick up the pieces if things don't go right. Athletes need a 'rock'. Someone to tell them it is going to be ok, to talk to them and help them navigate the hard times to find the good so they can smile and continue.

One such young man that the Academy has been proud to help is Thomas Kerkow-Hill. In his sport of paddling, he recently competed at the 2023 Paddle Australia Canoe Sprint GP2 event in Sydney. In a tough program he finished with a gold in the U/16 K2 500m and K2 200m. He also got a bronze in the K1 200m and fifth in the K1 500m. Going up an age group to the U/18, Thomas also was part of the K4 team where they won bronze in the K4 500m. It is wonderful to see how athletes we have had in programs have used the knowledge learnt in their everyday lives to improve performances. Thomas also achieved several personal bests and can now look forward to the National Sprints in Perth this month.

Congratulations Thomas and the Academy looks forward to working with many other athletes in the future.

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