



CSCS LIONS

Christ and Sports Culture

Living God-Centered in a “Sports is god” World

FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S DESK

Tough Like The G.O.A.T.

At a lunch break a couple weeks ago, CSCS teachers were discussing leadership styles based on personality preference, specifically related to the DISC assessment tool. A couple of interesting questions were posed, “What leadership style did Jesus possess and was there one trait more dominant than the other?”

One argument made suggested Jesus possessed all of them perfectly and displayed them at the precise time for any given situation. His leadership was perfect. There was no weakness in his style or personality.

Jesus was and is perfect. That is why He is the GOAT (Greatest Of All Time)! I sometimes wonder what Jesus would have been like if he played a sport as a teenager. He must have played games and interacted with his peers in some sort of competitive activities. There's so little we know about his life before He began his ministry.

In sports (and in life for that matter), having toughness is an important attribute to being successful. One of the criticisms I've heard over the years is CSCS athletes are not tough. This has puzzled me. Why is this a perception? Is it true? If so, why?

As I've processed these thoughts, I kept going back to Jesus. If we are to be like Jesus (Matt. 5:48; 1 Cor. 11:1), how did Jesus display toughness? With what we know of Jesus through scripture, my position is He was the GOAT when it comes to toughness.

In the world of sports, James Loehr defines toughness as “the ability to consistently perform toward the upper range of your talent and skill regardless of competitive circumstances.” (1)

Based on Loehr's definition (an expert in the field of toughness in sports), I've built a working definition for a Christ follower who is tough:

Glorifying God while performing at your highest possible level regardless of the competition, environment or circumstances.

The image we get when we think of toughness can often be distorted. Perhaps we think of a person rough around the edges, harsh, strict or angry.

However, if Jesus is the GOAT when it comes to toughness, our perception of toughness probably needs to change. Toughness can be evaluated in 4 areas: emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually. Jesus demonstrated perfect toughness in all these areas.

Over the past couple of months, I've been dialoging with CSCS coaches both in person and by email, discussing a program we could build to help our athletes develop toughness. There are those individuals who possess toughness naturally, but most of toughness is developed through nurture. Toughness is learned.

This newsletter is “setting the stage” with ideas on a program to help our athletes build toughness in sports. There is a common agreement that developing toughness in our athletes from a Christ-centered perspective has benefits well beyond the competitive environment and the high school experience. It develops skills in toughness that will reap benefits through the rest of life.

For now, I will leave you hanging with this question:

If Jesus is the GOAT in toughness and we are called to be like Jesus? Shouldn't Christians be the toughest athletes of them all?

--Jason Rollins, *Carpe Aeternitatem*