

Bouncing Back from Disappointment

As the season draws to a close and we reflect on the competitions we played in and what might have been had things gone our way. Often there is a tinge of disappointment to be felt especially by those who committed so much time, energy and money to competing nationally. Often these curlers practiced well but came up short in a competition they really wanted to do well in like a play down or a National event. Nothing stings so much sometimes as losing a close game when you have played at the top of your game. Sometimes close defeats can feel like victories when the opponent is so great and expected to win but you took them to the limit and disappointment is overshadowed by exceeding expectations. Other times playing poorly and losing badly is disappointing for different reasons.

Disappointment is a tricky feeling. We can be disappointed in ourselves which can feel really awful when we feel like we let ourselves down because we know we could have done better. On the other hand we can be disappointed in a team mate who underperformed, and we can feel a little resentful toward them because our goals were not achieved because of how we see their individual performance affecting our goals. Or we can be disappointed and deflated of having given so much for so little perceived reward. But hang on for a moment. Disappointment can take many forms and have scattered direction. Disappointment does not change results but it can motivate us to movement. It provides us with a decision, to choose to accept the reality and work with it, or continue to have a bit of a pity party about what happened.

Sport is exclusive. There can only ever be one eventual winner in a Championship at any level. A saying goes "It's not how many times you fall down, it's how many times you get up that count" or another saying is that "as long as you find your feet equal to the number of falls you've taken you'll be okay". The point of both statements is to be resilient after a setback. Recovering from a setback shows mental toughness, it shows that we can cope and renew our commitment to getting better and playing well. So how do you bounce back after a set back and cope with disappointment?

Productive Steps for Overcoming Disappointment

1. Look back at what happened and assess whether everything that could have been done was done to prepare you to your best level.
2. List the things that went well and you enjoyed about the experience.
3. Identify the things that did not work – don't dwell on them. Learn from them and think about how you would do it differently given the same situation.
4. Recognize what you did well and starting matching the things you want to improve with them.
5. Envision what your future performance looks like if you only do your best things
6. Set your vision to the next competitive event that you will test yourself at (It does not have to be the next one just one that feel strongly about doing very well at)
7. Set goals and use a top coach to help you. Someone with National level experience or higher (Hopefully someone level 3 certified or with success themselves on the national stage or higher).
8. Start planning how you are going to be at your best and put your energy, focus and desire to achieving your goals.
9. Do your plan.

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Disappointment in sport is an inevitable feeling and shows we care about what we do. There will be another competition and that is where your effort should be focused. Learn from losing without learning to lose. Use the off season and early 2011-2012 season to build your competitive capacity. Prepare for the toughest challenges ahead with the belief that you will be ready to perform at your top level against the best competition.

At the end of the 2012 have no regrets because you did what you could do to curl the best way possible.