



Becoming a champion

Here we are, a new race season is upon us and hopefully everyone is ready to go!! Ready to go, well that statement can mean a lot of things, the sled is ready to go, the mechanic is ready to go, the truck and trailer are ready to go, the athlete is ready to go. Ready to go, are you ready to go win, are you ready to go become a champion? What is the difference, what do these athletes do to take their game to the next level? I've been fortunate to work with champions, Iain Hayden, Logan Christian, Dylan Hall, Corey Watkinson, Zak Mason, Corin Todd and Jakob Rosko-Fong, and I'll let you know a few of the things that have helped these great athletes bring home the championships.

I said ready to go earlier in this article and being ready to go can encompass a lot of different things, the sleds, the mechanics, the transportation and the athlete, and truly being ready to go means that each of these elements is ready to go!! Here are some pointers for the sled, transportation, and team;

- Surround yourself with great people that you trust and can COMMUNICATE openly with.
- Sit down and assign people on your team with certain tasks that they will be responsible for before each weekend as well as at each race
 - Don't try and do everything yourself, you will get overwhelmed
 - Make checklists, print them off and have everyone make sure that their lists are completed before each weekend
- With your team, sit down with a calendar and mark each race as well as possible testing and riding days
 - Make sure that accommodations are booked or a place to stay is available for each day and race
- Communicate, make sure that you can communicate in an effective and constructive way with your team and vice versa
 - Coming off the track and saying that your sled sucks is not going to get anything done, work with your team and discuss what is wrong and work together to make it better
 - This is also true on the other side of things, telling your athlete that they rode awful does not help, discuss different sections and offer advice as to what try next time out on the track

Now for the athlete and what you can do to elevate your physical and mental approach to racing. First off the physical, well if you started training a month before the season started you're definitely behind the curve, in order to be a top athlete you need to understand that there is no off-season, you can take a few weeks off here and there but I know that guys like Iain don't take anymore than a week or two off during the whole year. Now training can mean a lot of different things, riding a dirt bike, maybe joining a running club, trying boxing, and mixing it up is healthy both physically and mentally as you won't get stale. On that note if you did just start training make the commitment now, and plan on staying active all year round.

Here are some points for the physical preparation:

- Warm-up prior to working out and riding. (email me and I will send you a guide for this)
- Include Yoga into your program at least twice a week.
- Include both cardio and weight training into your program two-three times a week.
- Make sure your eating a well balanced diet
- Make sure to add the appropriate supplements to your diet (email me and I will send you my recommendations)

The mental side of things, this is definitely the hardest and most complicated part of any program, and arguably the most important. There are so many aspects to mental training, but DOING is the most important, I've gone to hundreds of seminars and read countless books on the psychology of sports and unless you actually DO what they talk about, you won't make any changes. Think about it this way, if you read and or talk to a bunch of people about working out, and don't go to the gym, are you going to get in better shape? NO!! Challenge yourself; I believe that most people are 10 times more capable than they think. I host a Challenge Camp at Motopark each year, where we prove this to the SNOWCROSS athletes that come and participate. Unless you have failed, you have no idea what you are truly capable of!! Try new things, come to Challenge Camp next year, enter a BAD ASS Dash race, step out of your comfort zone and push your limits!! Have a mentor, you want to win, then surround yourself with people who have won, and make sure to stay in touch with them, I talk to my athletes almost every single day, I also have mentors that I'm in touch with at least on a weekly basis, you are the product of your surroundings, so if you surround yourself with great people you will become great yourself, DON'T settle for anything less. The biggest thing mentally for race day is to make things go as smoothly as possible, create a routine, and make sure that things are organized so you're not running around stressing yourself out.

Here are some pointers for making sure you are mentally prepared:

- Challenge yourself in some small way each and every week, then set a goal and challenge yourself in an extreme fashion, Challenge Camp, Marathon, Bad ASS DASH.
- Have a mentor, someone who can help guide you, and direct you to your goals

- TRUST; trust in the people around you and your program, without this trust and knowledge that you have a good program it will lead to self doubt and lack of confidence.
 - Be in touch with this mentor at least 2-3 times a week
- Make checklists for race day
 - Supplements
 - Warm-up / workout equipment
 - Stationary bike, rower, skipping rope, foam roller
 - Gear list
 - Helmet, tear offs, goggles, braces, whatever you need to bring to be completely prepared
 - Make a schedule for yourself, look at the race times and create a timeline for yourself
 - When to get up
 - When to start warming up
 - When to eat
 - When you race
 - Food preparation
 - Talk to whoever is in charge of this and give them the above mentioned schedule, so they can make sure that food is read for you.
- Be HONEST in reflection
 - After a race day sit down with your team and go over the event, being HONEST and constructive in order to make any necessary changes to help you succeed.
 - Reward yourself for accomplishing your goals, if we keep telling ourselves we need to do this better, or work hared we are really telling ourselves that we haven't done enough or we aren't good enough. Look back at when you started and be proud of how far you have come.

There are other aspects and more detail to all of these points, but I'm hoping that you can see and get an idea of what it takes to win, and not just win one or two times but to be at the top all the time as that is what it takes to be a champion!! If you have any questions about attending Challenge Camp, supplements or any parts of this article make sure to get a hold of me and follow me on twitter for updates and further tips.

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