

Getting “Kids These Days” to Compete

John Dowling, Head Coach, McLean High School, jmdowling@fcps.edu

What have you heard about “Kids these days...”?

What does it mean to compete?

Competing IS

“Finding a way to achieve a goal.”

Physical AND Mental effort

Thoughtful

Strategic & Planned

“FIO”

“Beating the Drill”

Competing IS NOT

“To strive to outdo or excel”

Trying hard (largest mistake)

Caring

Wanting

Hoping - “Hope is not a strategy”

What we’re all up against:

- Boredom
- Frustration

Why do kids love video games?

- Teamwork, Strategic, Social, Novel, Challenging

Cultural Emphasis on importance of Competition

- Life skill – someday will be competing for a job, a girlfriend, a contract/deal...
- Competition increases: Self awareness, Ability (and desire) to FIO
- Kids LOVE to keep score

What can you Expect?

- **Opportunities to learn *how* to compete, win, lose and FAIL**
- **Increased engagement, intensity and individual accountability**
 - Measurement = INTENT. More done in less time. “The score” / task becomes another coach
- **Increased pressure**
 - more game like environment = greater transfer of skills to the actual game
 - opportunities to learn how to deal with stress and anxiety of competition
 - opportunities to learn how to deal with your own expectations and failing to meet them
- **“The Cauldron” and the Data you collect doing your job for you**
 - Objective data > our subjective assessments
 - What you say: “Jimmy you need to hit the ball harder” VS What Jimmy Hears: “Coach doesn’t like me so I don’t start”
 - Increases ownership of their OWN development & Data can be used as immediate (or near immediate) feedback
- **Use of Small Sided Games / Teams Within the Team**
 - Players coaching each other and becoming WILLING to be coached by one another, Trusting each other, Team building

Competition is like driving your car...

- If you just floor it right from the start, you will crash
- Once you are moving, you adjust your speed based on what is in front of you and what is behind you

What are the simplest ways I can add competition to practice?

- Decide what matters to you and measure it: “Measure what you treasure” and “Measure for motivation” with the Test/Retest Model
- Keep Score and “Gamify” everything
- Use the stopwatch - Create a time standard (complete ___ task in ___ min/sec)
- Be sure to incentivize/reward – and be creative - you beat it you can name it!
- Culture of “Beat the drill” – creating game savvy players