What Does it Take to be an Athlete?

Being an athlete does not imply merely wearing the uniform and being just a member of the squad. There are many more important phases to think about if you want to be a winner not only in soccer but in life as well. Your coaches want to impress you with the importance of the following qualities absolutely necessary for every good athlete.

1. Are you coachable?

Can you take coaching? Can you take criticism without ever looking for an alibi? Are you a “know it all?” Will you always do your best to improve?

2. Are you possessed with the spirit of competition, which fires an intense desire to win?

Do you want to win with a passion – never taking “no” for an answer when there is a job to be done – a tackle to be made – a shot to be taken – a pass to make? Does it bother you to lose?

3. Are you willing to practice?

Not just reporting and putting in the necessary time but working every day with the same zeal, speed, and determination you use during a ball game? Do you have two speeds? A practice speed and a game speed? The great athletes have one speed, and it is the same speed every day, every practice and every game. If you loaf and cheat in practice you will loaf and cheat you and your teammates in the game.

4. Are you willing to make sacrifices?

Conditioning to play is not fun. It is not easy. It is time-consuming and demanding. Training is designed to accomplish specific objectives; the responsibility is heavy. It is rough and includes personal denials in order to remain in match condition, but it has its rewards. The only way for you to remain in good shape is never to get out of it.

5. Do you have the desire to improve?

Are you willing to practice the things you cannot do three times longer than the things you can do? Are you willing to put in long grinding hours, concentrating on skill until you perfect it? Are eager to work diligently at the skills you lack until they eventually become your strongest assets?
6. **Do you have the ability to think under fire?**

Can you concentrate on the work to be accomplished at the moment? Can you shut out from your mind a previous failure, success, rule infraction, or personal insult in order to give undivided attention to the offensive and defensive maneuver in the here and now? Games are not won by yesterday’s score, but by what is happening now, at this moment. Good athletes play every play up to their best ability never depending on past success to aid them.

7. **Are you willing to be impersonal toward your opponents?**

Do you shut out all personal feelings about your opponent except to take the ball from him as often and as quickly as you can in accordance with the rules? Our experiences have taught us that the moment a player becomes personal he plays only to release individual grievances and ceases to play soccer as a team member.

8. **Will you strive daily to improve your muscular coordination and speed?**

Soccer is a game of movement, daily activities will speed up your reaction time and improve your technical speed. Speed and coordination are necessary ingredients for a winning combination. Only through hard work can improvement take place. Players who lack these two physical qualities can help themselves and their team by improving in other attributes.

9. **Do you believe in your team, your coach?**

Your team is as good as you make it. Your coach has the responsibility of coaching, not his team, but your team. Are you willing to work toward the spirit of oneness so that everyone possesses the feeling of belonging through his or her contributions to the team?

10. **Are you willing to study as hard now as you did before coming out for soccer?**

Soccer was never meant to take the place of studies. The athletic tail must never wag the academic dog. This involves realignment in your time schedule. If soccer will consume two hours of your day then you must draw time not from scholastic program but from hours previously devoted to personal pursuits. If you must eliminate something from your schedule it must not be study time. First thing comes first, and your academics are of a paramount importance.