Show Everyone Why You're an Athlete

You’ve been preparing. Getting ready for battle. Sharpening your tools. Focusing your mind. Building your body, day by day. You’ve sacrificed. A lot. You’ve invested months - even years - for this moment. And now you’re ready.

But this isn’t the game you thought you’d be playing.

This isn’t the fight you asked for. That one was stolen from you. The things that were once familiar to you no longer apply. Rules, referees, umpires, officials, sportsmanship, equipment, clocks, periods, quarters, innings, timeouts, in-bounds, out-of-bounds, fair, foul - you typically know what to expect. This foe ignores all of it. This is the toughest opponent you’ve ever faced. They have a tactical advantage. It’s not a level playing field. Not by a mile.

You feel robbed. That life is unfair. And you would be right. Life is unfair. If anyone ever told you it wasn’t, they lied.

You feel angry. Sad. Powerless, even. And you would be justified. You have every right to feel intense disappointment.

You feel broken. As if all the work was for nothing. A feeling of despair. As if everything leading up to this was meaningless - worthless - if you don’t get a chance to perform now. And while I can imagine why you might be feeling that way, you would be wrong to believe it.

Everything you’ve done up to this point is for a reason. All you’ve learned from sports is needed at this very moment. Now is not the time to sulk. Now is the time to get to work. And here is why.

You’re an Athlete

The past few weeks have brought uncertainty and confusion, the likes of which most of us have never experienced before. Almost suddenly, everything changed. This situation went from something in another land, to something on the other side of the country, to something in our backyards - all in the blink of an eye. A week ago, the idea that we had played our last games or had our last practices was unthinkable. Now, it’s hard to imagine any other outcome.

Being an athlete means something. And that something is being demanded now more than ever. That’s because the qualities that make a great athlete are also the characteristics required to get through a crisis. You were made for this. Better put, you were built for this. You’ve worked for this moment. Just because there’s no game to play doesn’t mean you are no longer an athlete. In fact, that’s precisely the reason you need to keep being an athlete. Because to get through this, you will need to lean on all that you’ve learned.
You’re a Fighter
Athletes love challenges, am I right? If something is too easy, you get bored. Easy is not what drives you. What drives you is the satisfaction of knowing you can overcome any obstacle. To achieve against all odds. If you are given something, it’s not worth fighting for. Athletes love to fight for what they want. And you need to fight now.

There is no doubt you are being presented with a challenge. And you already know that with great challenges come even greater opportunities. So what are the opportunities that lie ahead of you right now? How will this situation make you better? How will you grow from this? Take time to think about this. Write everything down. There is light to be found even in the darkest places.

There is no challenge too great for you to conquer. Remember, you’re an athlete.

You’re Resilient
Remember earlier we mentioned feeling broken? Athletes may feel broken at times, but they never fully break. Resiliency is a trait you must possess if you want to be successful. When you get knocked down, you get up and dust yourself off. Simple as that. Because if you don’t, you know the game is over. Responding fiercely in the face of adversity is programmed into your DNA at this point.

This situation is uncomfortable. Athletes know what it means to feel uncomfortable. You are put in uncomfortable situations all of the time. Now you need to make the necessary adjustments to win. You’ve had things taken from you. Special things. Comfortable things like school, friends, workouts, freedom, restaurants, special events. Even toilet paper. You’ve been knocked down. Time to respond.

All of those years you spent building resiliency is about to be put to good use. Remember, you’re an athlete.

You’re Disciplined
Wash your hands for 20 seconds.
Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
Stop shaking hands (that’s ok, we love fist bumps).
Stop fist bumps (that’s ok, we can elbow it out).
Stay six feet from everyone (hand signals anyone?).
Disinfect frequently used items often.
Avoid social gatherings.


You have to be disciplined to be great. Wake-up. Work-out. Go to school. Study. Go to practice. Do homework. Eat right. Get to sleep. Your entire life is structured. Scheduled. Endless drills. Hours of methodical, intentional practice to perfect your technique. Intense focus on the smallest details. Being disciplined is a way of life for you.

And to beat this, you will need to be disciplined.
Staying on task with your schoolwork without the regular schedule may be hard for some. Not for an athlete. Balancing time, creating a schedule, these come naturally to you. Athletes thrive in structure. And when there is no structure, like now, great athletes create it for themselves. Plan your day. Wake up at a regular time. Do something physical every single day - it’s good for your body and your mind. Make time for peace and quiet. Make time for prayer and meditation. You will be spending a lot of time on your computer and your phone, be sure to unplug for at least a couple of hours each day. And if you stick to your schedule, yes, you will have time for Netflix.

Discipline is your guide through this crisis. Remember, you’re an athlete.

You’re Patient
Work while you wait. Athletes understand that concept better than most. The things we want most in sports take time. Winning doesn’t happen overnight. A great team cannot be built in a day. Championships cannot be won the first week of the season. It takes weeks, months, even years to build success. But all along, you keep grinding. Instant gratification doesn’t exist in the world of an athlete. Imagine a swimmer who has been training years for a moment that lasts less than a minute. Imagine a wrestler who has poured his heart and soul on the mat, waiting his turn for a chance at the title. Imagine a basketball player taking countless foul shots in practice, so that her hand is steady when the moment comes to sink two to seal victory for her team.

Athletes understand that the game is the “end product.” Rarely do people see the intense hours of preparation that go into those relatively short competitions. We love the competition. We live for it. If asked, almost every athlete would tell you they prefer games over practice. And therein lies an interesting dichotomy - athletes are competitive by nature and want success so badly they are willing to sacrifice beyond ends to attain it, but the success we so desperately seek takes time to pursue. We are forced to wait for what we want. And because of that very fact, we have developed incredible patience.

Right now, your patience is being tested. You don’t know if or when your life will return to “normal.” You have countless questions: When will I get back to school? When will it be safe to go out again? When will this virus go away? When will I be back with my teammates? When will my team practice again? Will we even have a season? If we do, will I be ready?
No one has the answers to these questions, which is even more frustrating. But, what we do know is that, just like in sports, patience is rewarded. Do you always win the championship? No. Do you always perform your best? No. Working hard and remaining patient throughout the process do not guarantee you get what you want. But what they do guarantee is so much more valuable.

Hard work and patience guarantee quality character. Character that will be needed well beyond sports. The type of character that is needed right now, to get you through this very moment. It’s a good thing you’ve been working on it all these years.

Patience is an important virtue that will get you through this crisis. And you already have it. Remember, you’re an athlete.
You’re a Great Teammate
Of all your wonderful qualities, this may be the most important. Especially right now. You know that in order to win, you must be unselfish. You must care more about the success of your teammates than that of your own. You understand that nothing special was ever accomplished alone. It requires committed coaches, mentors, teachers, teammates, supporters, loved ones, friends, and so on to reach your potential.

Without great teammates, our chances of defeating this virus drop significantly. If we look out for one another, stay disciplined in our approach, exercise prudence and patience, we will beat this thing. And although we can’t be physically near one another, we are more connected now than ever before. Together, and only together, will we be able to destroy this opponent.

Right now, we need great teammates. Right now, we need great athletes.

Right now, we need you.

Are you ready to show everyone why you’re an athlete?

Vito Chiaravalloti II '99
Director of Athletics
Christian Brothers Academy