



BETTER ATHLETES
BETTER PEOPLE



When Opponents Physically Outmatch Your Team

This resource stems from a question submitted to the Ask PCA blog. Responses come from our experts including PCA Trainers, who lead live group workshops for coaches, parents, administrators and student-athletes.

"As a coach, what do you say to your players when they have seen during pre-game warm-ups that they are physically outmatched by their opponents?"

PCA Response by Lisa Christiansen, PCA Trainer – New York City Area

Some of the best games my teams have ever played have been against physically stronger opponents. Part of my coaching philosophy is always telling my team that "it's all about us." I want them to work on things they can control and not worry about things they can't.

First and most important, what can I do as a coach to help my team deal with the mismatch? I set up my practice plans that week to address the mismatch and keep it positive. Second, I speak with them at the beginning of warmup. My comments are short and to the point. I tell them to think about what we worked on, not what they see on the other side. I give a specific example. I remind them when they take the field that it's what we do that matters and remind them specifically what we are going to do.

When a team is physically mismatched, you give the players opportunity to take the field with confidence when you remind them how hard they have worked to prepare and that they can do it together. As the game goes on, I adjust like any good coach does to what is happening on the field. I challenge my players to give it their all.

There is no greater life lesson in sport than overcoming adversity. A team that can overcome adversity will be successful.

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