

FAILING TO PREPARE IS PREPARING TO FAIL



Being a quarterback, at any level, means you are held to higher standards than your teammates. It is just the nature of the position. The more recognition and fame you receive means the more responsibility you have and the greater the expectations are. You have to be like a coach on the field. With that comes the responsibility of preparing like a coach.

In going through the process of putting ideas on paper for this article I remembered a Saturday morning team meeting in Green Bay when Coach Bobby Knight came to speak to us. He said "Mental is to the Physical as 4 is to 1." In other words, the game is 80% mental. I firmly believe that to be true. It goes without saying that I also believe you should spend most of your time during the week studying the playbook and watching opponent film. If you think about it, you are taking a test each week in front of hundreds, sometimes, thousands of people. I have always felt better about myself when prepared for a test, as opposed to just winging it. And in front of a crowd, you better believe your preparation, or lack thereof, will be exposed.

Knowing the game plan for the week should be a main focus when studying. Just as the defenses you face change week to week, so do the plays you run to attack it. It may be the same play as last week but a completely different formation, or shift/motion. We called it "window dressing." The most game plan specific areas tend to be 3rd down and red zone. This is where a quarterback makes his money. Being good in these areas means drives are extended and points are put on the board. But don't spend all your time just studying what you are doing. It is equally important to know what defenses you will be facing. What is their base defense? When do they like to blitz? What blitzes, or pressures, do they like to bring and what coverages go with it? Do they like to play man or zone in the red zone? What do they do on 3rd down? All of these questions should be asked when watching film. In the NFL, we typically watched the 4 most recent games of our opponent, simply because the tendencies can change during the course of a season. You may also try to find a game where the offense is comparable to yours. When watching these games, most positions spend the bulk of their film study watching the guy they are going to be blocking, or the defensive back that will be lined up across from him. But the QB can't just watch one or two guys. You have to know which safeties or corners are their best cover guys, which ones like to cheat or guess on routes. Who is their nickel player? In addition, what does that linebacker look like before he blitzes? Sometimes you find a nickel player or linebacker standing still over the slot receiver, eyeing the ball trying to time up the cadence; an "iron deer on the lawn" look. That's a tell-tale sign he is coming, especially when he is backed up by a safety. Knowing the defensive fronts and how they look can also clue you in to what coverage or pressure you may be facing.

movin' the chains

premiere quarterback coaching

tel: [318.730.6958](tel:318.730.6958)

email: craig@qb1sports.com

web: www.qb1sports.com

FAILING TO PREPARE IS PREPARING TO FAIL (CONT.)



By understanding the game plan and being able to anticipate what the defense will do should give you a ton of confidence leading up to kickoff. The confidence a quarterback shows is usually contagious, and more times than not equates to a productive offense. Being mentally prepared also means that those butterflies you feel before the game are no longer from nervousness, but anxiousness to get the game started.

Lastly, don't underestimate the power of mentally envisioning plays. Close your eyes at night and turn on that highlight reel in your mind. Picture yourself making that 4th down conversion or throwing the game winning touchdown. Crave that feeling you get when you win. Feel your heart race as you picture yourself anticipating a particular blitz and making the play or what you may audible to if you are supposed to. When you recognize what you are seeing you are able to react quicker by getting through your decision making processes quicker.

Being mentally prepared enables you to use the entirety of that other 20% that is the physical. Put in the time during the week mentally preparing yourself for a live test in front of your family, friends, teammates and coaches. Pay it forward and good things will happen. In the end, the scoreboard shows the final score, but the game is won or lost in how you prepare.

Craig Nall
QB1Sports.com

*For more information on how to turn your mental approach to sports into an advantage over your competition, check out the book **Mind Gym**, by Mack Casstevens.

movin' the chains

premiere quarterback coaching

tel: **318.730.6958**

email: **craig@qb1sports.com**

web: **www.qb1sports.com**