



Failure is Never Fatal

By Chris Fisher

Former Palo Duro High School Head Coach

Coach Nick Saban has a famous quote of, "Success is never final and failure is never fatal." Having been in this business for over 19 years, I feel this might be the most appropriate quote I have ever heard. When you look at Coach Saban's career, the biggest thing that stands out, obviously, are the six national championships. However, when you hear Coach Saban speak, he is always looking to what is next. Success is never final. There is always a new mountain to climb. Complacency is a killer. You have to keep pushing the ball forward. Every year at the end of the season, your self-evaluation is critical. I feel that our association has really embraced this concept and the chalk talk and zoom clinics are the best in the state. It's easy to say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That's dangerous. Your opponents are trying to catch and pass you. If you aren't trying to do the same, they will win!

However, I like the second part of the quote, failure is never fatal. In this profession, we are so tied to a record that it is easy to say that if you lose, you are a failure. This too is a dangerous mindset. We are in the business of building our country's next generation of citizens and leaders. Our ultimate scoreboard will be how these girls and boys become women and men. They will be the ones we depend on as we get older. If we are neglecting this part of the job, then we aren't doing it right. We took over the program at my Alma Mater with high hopes. A return to glory if you will. We had experienced success in our previous spot, and we knew that leaving the security our previous position provided would be a giant risk. But, we also knew that if I ever wanted to be a head coach, it was now or never. So, we took a chance. We bet on ourselves. For five years, we battled our tails off and we could not have asked for a better group of kids or coaches to go to war with. Ultimately, we didn't get as far as we would have liked, and we had gone as far as we could. A lot of people will go to Max Preps and see the record and say we failed. No way. The influence of our

staff made a definite impact on our families and community. If we hadn't pick up the rope and tried our best, it might not have been done. So now, in a transition, I am learning the hard realities of the business. You are only as good as your last stop. It would be very easy to say, we failed. Instead of sitting around and feeling sorry, we took a different approach. How can we take the lessons learned from failure and turn it into a success story? Our book isn't finished, and this is just a chapter in the comeback. We had to be critical in our analysis and be okay with what we discovered. Having the chance to take a step back and reflect, there were roads not taken and decisions that backfired. However, if you never put yourself in the position to make those decisions or choose the path, you can't get where you are going.

I have said all of this not as a pity story or to ask for condolences. I say it to be a source of inspiration. Don't be afraid to take a job in a difficult situation. Don't be afraid to bet on yourself. Failure by any measure, is never fatal!



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