

Why Athletes Use Alcohol and Drugs...

Coaches need to be aware of why athletes -- perhaps even their own players -- may be using alcohol and other drugs. Athletes can be overwhelmed by pressure:

- Pressure to win.
- Pressure to perform well.
- Pressure to maintain a "cool" image.

When athletes use alcohol or other drugs, they feel the same “high” that is experienced after they win a big game. Sometimes when they come off the playing field, they want to experience that good feeling by turning to a mood-altering drug. If their team has lost the game, they may replace their depressed feelings with something that feels good. Many of them turn to alcohol, some of them turn to other drugs.

Medical studies show that the use of alcohol and other drugs by athletes’ affects their participation in sports, their social development, and their academic development. Even more alarming, athletes report that there are few “casual” drinkers or users among them. They confirm that when teenagers drink, three things happen:

1. They drink until they pass out or get sick.
2. They drink until the alcohol runs out.
3. They drink to get drunk.

Alcohol and most drugs interfere with an athlete’s physical and mental abilities.