David Wayne Fish: The Moment Before the Swing Teaches More Than the Swing

David Wayne Fish, a marketing specialist and father of six, says the instant before a child acts under pressure reveals more than any box score, and explains how he coaches toward that instant instead of away from it.

Laguna Niguel, California Nov 22, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - A Full Count, a Set Point, a Dropped Pass

Picture a kid standing in against a full count, two outs, bases loaded. Or a twelve-year-old serving at set point with a tournament bracket on the line. Or the receiver who just dropped a pass he has caught a hundred times in practice.

David Wayne Fish has coached long enough across football, baseball, and tennis to know these moments look different on the surface but run on the same current underneath. The scoreboard moment is loud. What happens in the half-second before it is quiet, and it is the part he says actually matters.

"Anybody can coach the swing," Fish says. "Coaching what happens in the kid's head three seconds before the swing, that's the job nobody signed up to do, and it's the one that sticks."

What He Watches for Before He Watches the Score

Fish says he has trained himself to look away from the ball at the exact moment most parents and coaches lock onto it. He watches the kid's shoulders. He watches whether they look over at the sideline or stay locked on the play. He watches breathing.

"A kid who's about to fail well breathes different than a kid who's about to fail badly," he says. "That sounds strange until you've watched a thousand at-bats. Then it sounds obvious."

He says the tell usually shows up before the outcome does, and that is where he says coaching actually happens, not in the postgame talk.

The Lesson Underneath the Lesson

The dropped pass, the blown call, the double fault: Fish says none of those are the lesson. The lesson is what the kid does with his body and his face in the five seconds after.

"Does he find the next play, or does he go looking for who to blame?" Fish says. "I'd rather have a kid who drops the ball and claps for the next snap than a kid who catches everything and sulks when he doesn't."

He says this is harder to coach than a batting stance, because it cannot be drilled the same way. It has to be modeled, repeated, and noticed out loud, in real time, not saved for a speech at the end of the season.

Why He Builds Practice Around This Moment

Fish says this is why he runs drills that put kids in mildly uncomfortable spots on purpose: a serve with a

crowd watching, a grounder hit a half-step faster than usual, a route run with a defender draped on the receiver. Not to trip kids up. To give them repetitions at the moment before the moment, where composure either shows up or does not.

"You can't manufacture a championship moment at Tuesday practice," he says. "But you can manufacture the feeling of it. Close enough that the nervous system starts to recognize it as familiar instead of as a threat."

He says kids who get those repetitions tend to look calmer later, not because the stakes got smaller, but because the feeling stopped being new.

Fish ties this back to something he says he learned growing up in Michigan around his own father: that composure is not a personality trait some kids have and others don't. It is a rehearsed response, and it is teachable, the same as a backhand or a two-seam grip.

"I don't care if a kid wins the point," he says. "I care if he's still standing the same way after he loses it as he was before he played it. That's the kid I'd put in again."

About David Wayne Fish

David Wayne Fish is a marketing specialist and consultant who has worked as a CEO for companies in the health and wellness space, based in Laguna Niguel, California. He is the father of six children and coaches football, baseball, and tennis, drawing on lessons from his own upbringing in Michigan in the way he works with young athletes.

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