

# LEVEL UP

## Alum shares coaching tips in new book

To become champions, athletes need to train and practice. But they also need a certain mindset, says **Ben Loeb** (MBA '84), author of *Next-Level Coaching: How to Use Sport Psychology to Educate, Motivate, and Improve Student-Athlete Performance*. Loeb, a tennis coach, teacher, and long-time athlete, wrote the book to share practical advice on how athletes can overcome some of the psychological challenges of competition.

"The most common obstacles are fear of failure, fear of success, perfectionism, and maintaining emotional control," he says. "Performance will be affected by how you look at competition."

Published by River Grove Books in 2018, *Next-level Coaching* is a user-friendly guide that covers such topics as mental toughness, confidence, focus, and motivation. The format is a combination of practical advice and exercises designed to help athletes self-evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, build confidence and gain new perspectives on competing.

"The exercises can be done in 10 minutes," Loeb says, adding that coaches can use the book to complement practices, covering one or two exercises each week. Athletes can use the book individually, as well.

Inspirational quotes and acronyms help athletes remind themselves to stay focused. For example, Loeb advises readers to play above the "RIM" when they don't succeed.

"RIM stands for reflect on it, imagine what you want to do moving forward, and move on," he says. "Believing in oneself is a risk, and when things don't work out, it's natural to be disappointed. But what's most important is learning and moving forward, advice that applies not only to sports, but to life."

**"The MBA program has stood the test of time and won. One of the exercises in my book asks if you are an arriver or a striver? The business school continues to be a striver. The MBA program continues to hold itself to a standard of excellence."**

The book emphasizes the importance of taking pride in personal excellence. What are you doing when no one else is looking? Successful athletes have certain expectations of themselves and compete to achieve a standard of personal excellence and being the best they can be, rather than just competing for the win.

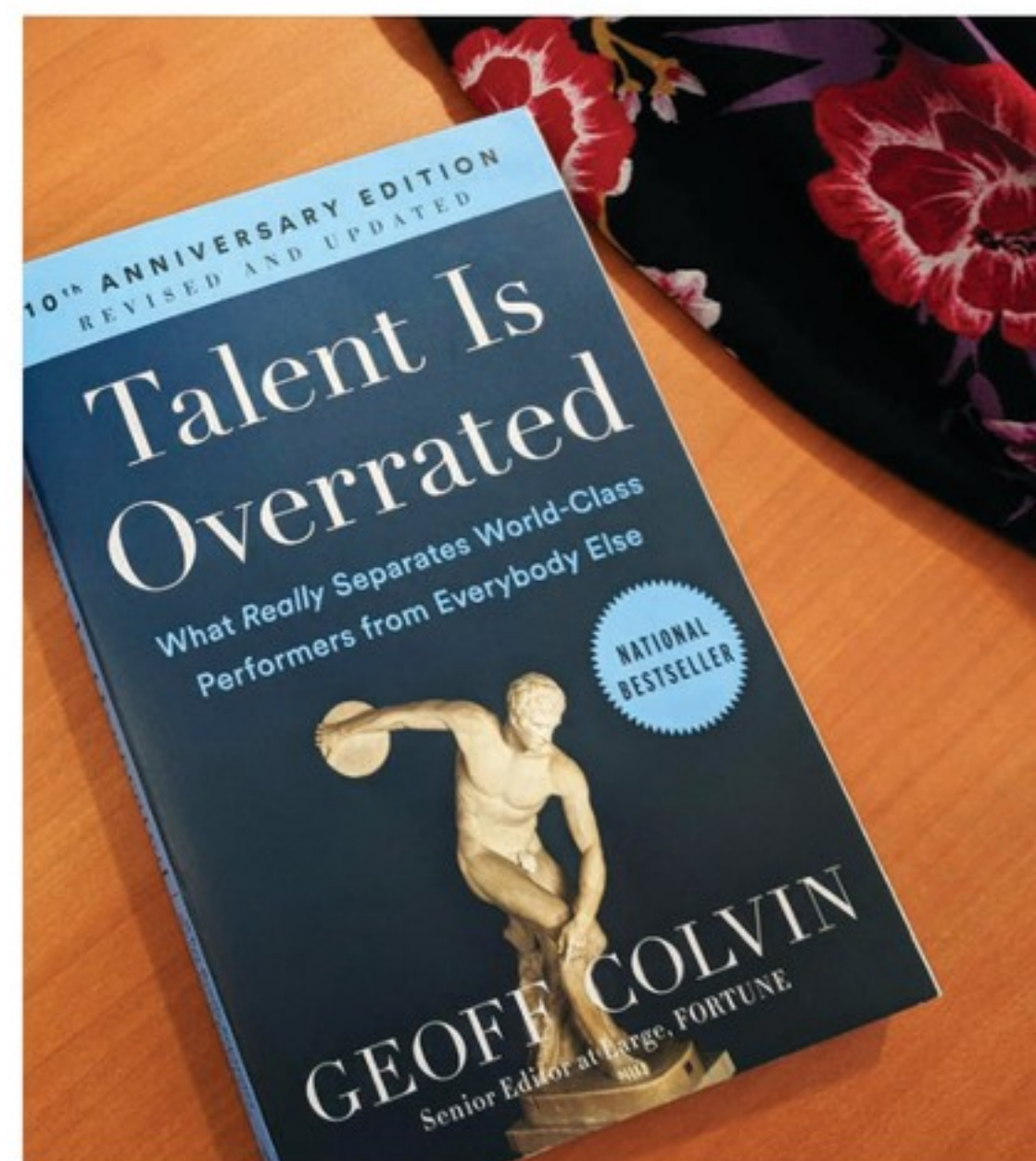
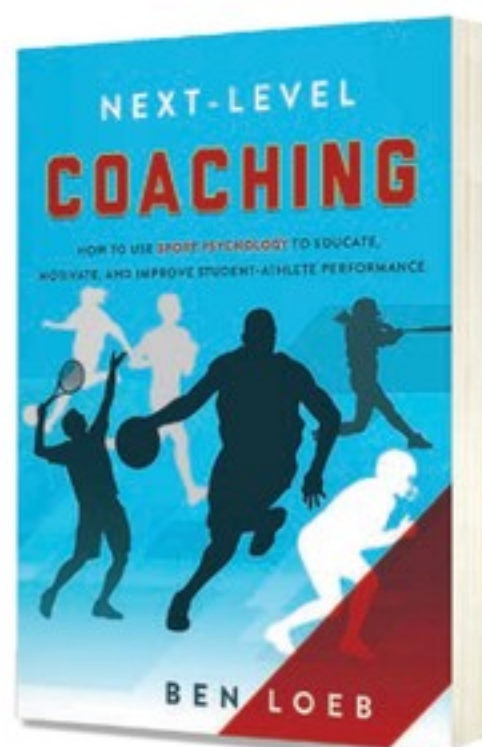
Loeb has coached in many United States Tennis Association sectional and national team events and has received several honors, including awards from the United States Professional Tennis Association, the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame, and the National Federation of High Schools. The teams he's coached have won more than 1,000 dual meets, 18 state championships, and 39 Final Four appearances.

When Loeb competed in tennis tournaments, he recalls that his mother always told him to relax and have fun. Though at the time he didn't understand how a serious competition could be fun, he has since figured it out. "True competitors look at the situation as a challenge and find fun in that challenge," he says.

After earning a bachelor's degree at the University of Colorado in Boulder and MBA at Arizona State University, Loeb started his career as a credit analyst in a bank but realized that it wasn't his passion.

"I combined my interest in business with my interest in coaching high school tennis," he says. "I was also fascinated by sports psychology and how important it is to an athlete's performance."

He attended workshops and eventually earned an education specialist degree at the University of Missouri-Columbia while he coached the women's tennis team. Today he teaches a sport psychology course at Rock Bridge High School in Columbia, Missouri, where he coaches the boys' and girls' tennis teams.



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