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The Nature and Nurture of Sports Performance, Blog 2

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THE NATURE AND NURTURE OF SPORTS PERFORMANCE (UNIV 291)

<https://rampages.us/naturenurture/author/hallvc/>

Victoria Hall

Friendly Conversation

by [Hallvc](#) on September 26, 2015 in [Word on the Street](#)

I asked one of my friends who also happens to be an exercise science major as well as we were walking to the store what he thought about the debate between nature vs. nurture and which one they thought mattered the most when it came to sports performance. My friend said that even though he knows that both can play a role, his opinion was that nature mattered the most. He says that elite athletes are born not made, while someone can spend hours and hours training and working on their specific sport, a person isn't gonna be an elite athlete unless they are born with the proper skills. He said that not everyone is born to be an elite athlete, some people will never reach that level of performance because they just don't have the DNA blueprint to be one. I also asked him what he thought about parents pushing their children into playing sports or parents wanting their children to play sports. He said that he didn't really understand why parents would push their kids into playing sports especially if that child didn't want to play that specific sport or if that child wasn't good at sports. He said sometimes he questions parents' motives into why they would push their kids into playing sports, he said sometimes it seems like parents want their kids to play sports because maybe it's something that parent wanted to do at that age but couldn't or that they're trying to live that aspect of their life through their child.

Nature or Nurture?

by [Hallvc](#) on September 25, 2015 in [Say Again?](#)

I recently had a conversation on the phone with a family friend from back home. Whenever we have conversations we always end up getting on the topic of sports or have some type of sport related conversation. This time I brought up the debate between nature and nurture and I asked him what he thought about the topic. He told me he thinks that both can play a role when it comes to sport performance. I asked him to elaborate on that or tell me why he thought both and he said because yes a person can be born with a certain level of skill set to be an elite athlete but that person also has to be around the right environment in order to harvest that skill set. He brought up an example as to how nurture plays a key role by bringing up athletes back at home where I'm from. He talked about how back at home athletes really don't have the necessary resources to be able to expand on their skill set besides playing sports at school. Some places have clubs or traveling teams that kids can join when they're young but back at home the kids there would have to go somewhere else in order for them to join a traveling sport team. He also said that we don't have enough resources to help the kids be better at

their designated sport which sometimes shows when the schools in our area would play other schools who have those resources and you can tell who's the better team. At the end of the conversation I told him that I agreed with his opinion on the subject and that I pretty much have the same idea when it comes to the debate on nature vs. nurture.

Activity set 2

by [Hallvc](#) on September 21, 2015 in [Another Look](#)

The TED talk "Never ever give up" was very inspiring and interesting to watch. As I was watching this TED talk, I thought about what this course is really about and tried to break down in my mind what I thought was more important in sports performance, nature or nurture? This video brings up another important aspect when it comes to performance, mental toughness. Sometimes I question if an athlete can be born with mental toughness or if it's something that has to be developed over time. In my previous blog post, I said that having the drive, will, and mental ability to play your perspective sport to the best of your ability is something that can be developed, but after watching the TED talk "Never ever give up" i'm beginning to question or consider that mental toughness could also be something that you're born with. For a 60 year old women wanting to swim over 100 miles from Cuba to Florida because that was her goal takes a lot of will, drive, and mental toughness, I feel like both nature and nurture played a role in her performance.

As I was reading the PDF on identifying genes, I thought about whether or not there could possibly be a gene for athletic performance. I've always found gene testing to be very interesting and i've even thought about doing it in the future. Sometimes I wonder for myself whether or not I have genes for athletic abilities or where I even got my athletic abilities from because my dad didn't play sports in school and my mom said she liked playing sports like soccer and softball but she didn't consider herself an athlete. I decided to look into whether or not there was an actual gene for athletic ability and I came across an article that talks about a "sports gene" called ACTN3 and gene testing. In the article it talks about this company called ATLAS and they run gene tests that look at common genetic variation within the ACTN3 gene and has been associated in studies with elite athlete status.

Link about ACTN3 gene and ATLAS:

<http://www.wired.com/2008/11/the-actn3-sports-gene-test-what-can-it-really-tell-you/>

Activity set #1

by [Hallvc](#) on September 14, 2015 in [Initial Impressions](#)

I found the NPR segment "How likely, is it, really, that your athletic kid will turn pro" to be very interesting especially the statement that 26% of high school parents want their children to be professional athletes. I know that starting a child off in a sport young can help them in the future but not every child who does so will grow up to play the sport professionally. I've heard of parents who push their children into playing sports or start them off in a sport at a young age just because they played sports, but those kids maybe grew up to play at the college level and not the professional level. In my opinion, not everyone is meant to be an athlete, no matter how young you start them off; some kids will never have the ability to be successful at playing sports. I do believe that genes play a huge role in

determining athletic ability, but when it comes to being able to sustain and maintain that ability, you also have to be around an environment that allows you to. In the panel video they brought up a good point where IQ plays a role in an athlete's success and being a "coachable" player, which means having drive, being open to constructive criticism, and wanting to improve. That's something that a person isn't born with but is something that develops over time.

Victoria Hall

by [Hallvc](#) on September 6, 2015 in [What brought you here?](#)

Hi! My name is Victoria Hall, I'm a senior here at VCU majoring in exercise science with a minor in psychology. In high school I played basketball and I ran track but since then I stopped playing organized sports and just focused more on exercising and training. I originally wasn't planning on taking a course over the bike race but when I heard about this particular course I thought it would be really interesting to take. Sometimes I wonder if my athletic abilities were influenced by nature or nurture. I'm excited to see what this class has in store in the upcoming weeks.