

Toughness is Built by Running Uphill

(The Jami Goldman Story)

Team toughness is one of the most important and defining traits of any team. But tough teammates are forged only in the fires of adversity, and Jami Goldman's story illustrates the need to encourage yourself, and your team members, to embrace every challenge they encounter.

In December of 1987, while driving with a friend through Arizona on their way home from a ski trip, 19 year old Jami Goldman took a wrong turn and then wrecked on a seldom-traveled road and was stranded for 11 days when the road was closed off by the state during a snowstorm...

When rescued, Jamie spent 7 weeks in the hospital and after a three week battle to keep them, eventually had both her legs amputated due to the severe damage of frostbite.

Why is this important to your people? Because mental toughness and strength of character are only developed by "running uphill".

To that point in her life, Jami had been a normal teenager with nothing in her life setting her apart as extraordinary. But we all take wrong turns, and we all get stranded in tough situations at some point in our life- and it is **how we respond to that adversity** that determines our success on the court - and in life.

How many of you have ever watched somebody running downhill? Is it difficult? ...NO! It is easy- and you can tell they are enjoying it- it takes so little effort to and is easy to take credit for moving so quickly while letting gravity do the work. It's the same way as an athlete. Maybe you are enjoying a lead because the other team has made some unforced errors or are just not very talented. It feels good to enjoy the ease of those moments... BUT THEY DO NOT MAKE YOU TOUGHER OR BETTER!

You get toughened and stronger by running uphill- but that is something that most people don't want to do. The same person you may have watched running downhill probably went much slower- maybe jogged, maybe walked, maybe they even stopped to rest for a while when they reached a hill. That is what most people do- they experience the adversity of a hill and slow down or stop.



Mental toughness is seeing the hill and running it! It is being down 10 points and shaking your fist and choosing to dig in and work harder. Toughness is standing up to your circumstances and not giving in to them or becoming a victim.

I told you about Jami because following her leg amputations, in the midst of multiple required surgeries, Jami earned two college degrees, became a preschool teacher, and became a world-class disabled sprinter who competed for a spot on the 2000 U.S. Para-Olympic Team.

Jami has competed in the U.S., Germany, Australia, and England and is the world's fastest double amputee, below the knee, among women track runners. She holds the world record in her class for the 1500 meter sprint and she is the only double-below-knee amputee in the world to complete a 1/2 marathon...

Now she runs uphill everyday... And running uphill – meeting challenges and adversity head on – is the only thing that will make YOU a better person, a better player, or a better team.



If your team is underachieving, or if you feel that your organization's culture needs a boost of energy, toughness, trust, or fun – consider the benefits of a team building event or [training workshop](#) to refocus your organization and achieve Great Results!

