

Mental Skills for Successful Performance



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The mind is the athlete. The body is simply the means it uses to run faster or longer, jump higher, shoot straighter, kick better, swim harder, hit further, or box better.

Bryce Courtney, *The Power of One*, 1992

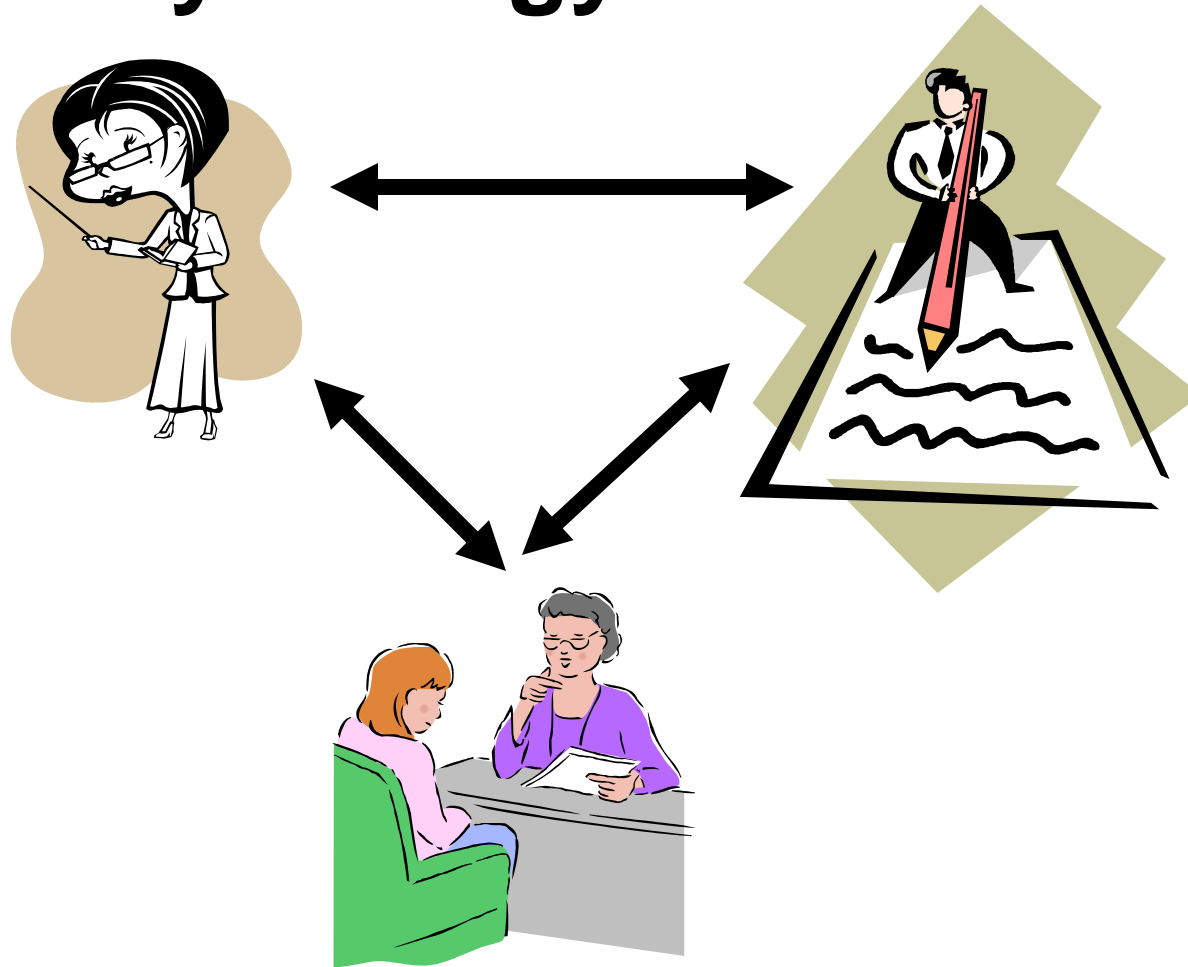
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Who am I and what is my role?



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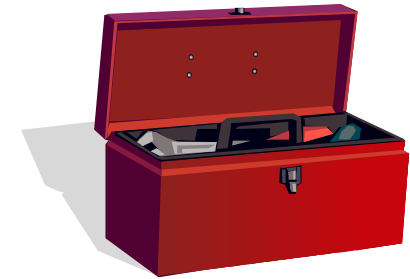
Sport Psychology Consultant



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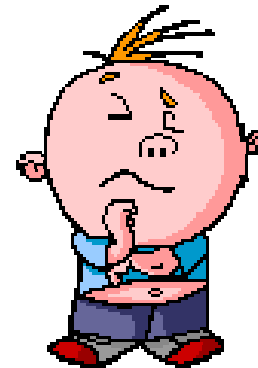
Who am I and why am I here?

- Sport Psychology Consultant—”mental coach”
- Former athlete and coach
- Team and individual athletes
- Objective: To help you develop the proper tools in order to be successful in sport and life



Brainstorm

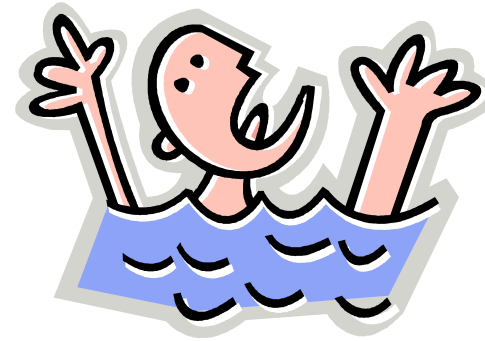
What does it take to
be a great athlete?



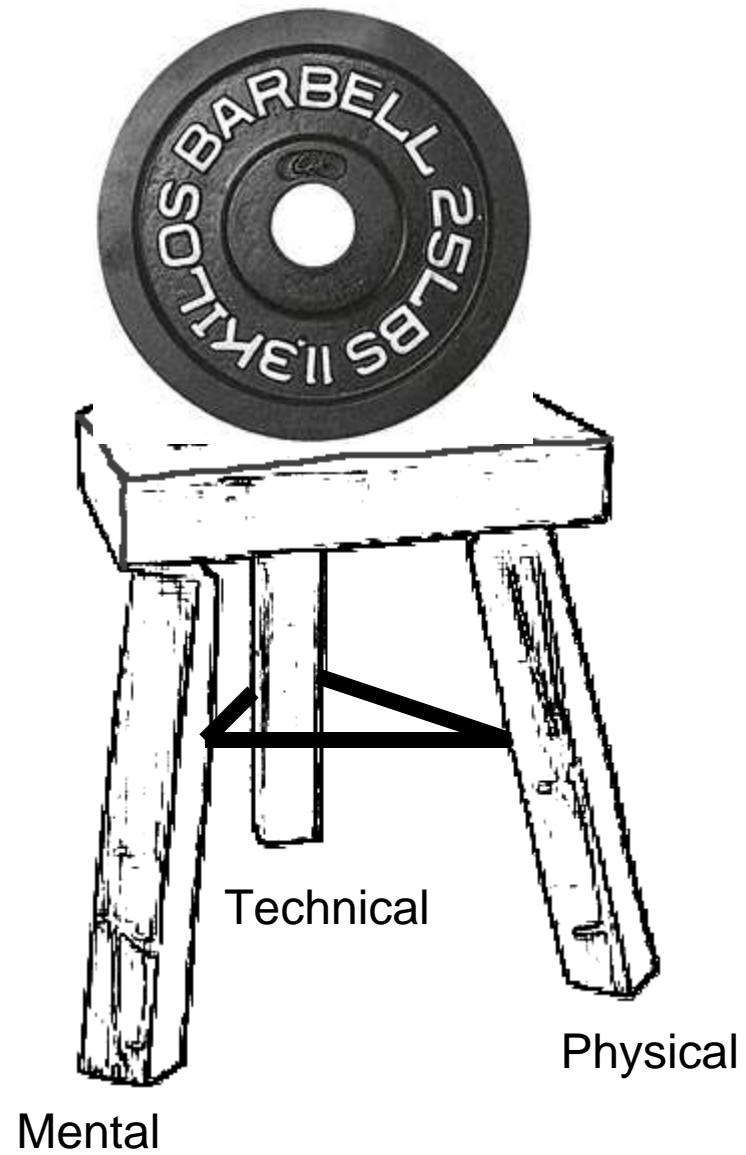
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Mental Toughness

When do you feel as though you fall apart (things break down on you) as an athlete?



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5 important mental skills

1. Imagery
2. Goal Setting
3. Arousal Regulation
4. Focus/Attention
5. Controlling One's Fear/Thinking Positively

1. Imagery



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5 senses + Kinesthetic

1. Sight
2. Smell
3. Taste
4. Touch
5. Sound



6. Kinesthetic

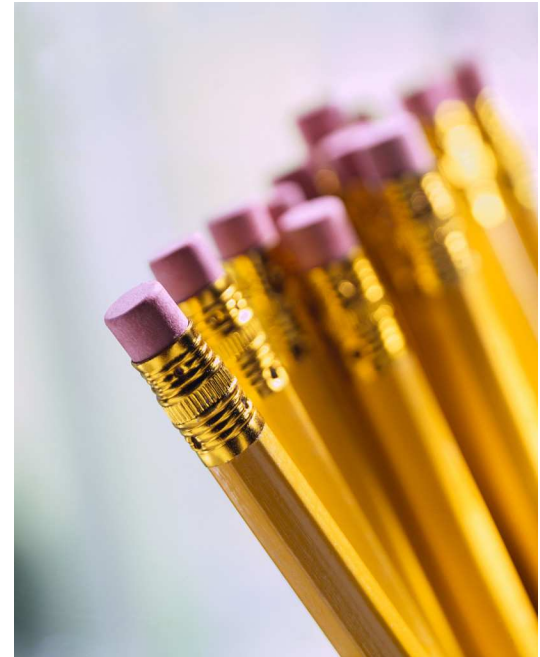
Tools: Improving Your Imagery

- Imagine your room at home
- Once you've mastered that, imagine your training venue

- 2 key aspects are..
 - Control (are you able to manipulate the image?)
 - Vividness (are you able to see the image clearly?)

Are you a good imager?

Challenge: (Should you wish to accept it!)



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2. Goal Setting

- What is a goal?
- Why do we set goals?



Tools: Determining Your Goals

- Performance Profiling (handout)
- Column 1: Go back to list of attributes. Choose 8-10 that you think are most important to you.
- Column 3: Rate where you feel you are (at this moment) on each attribute (1=not at all like me & 10= could not get any better).
- Column 4: Subtract your current score from the ideal score.



Goal setting guidelines

- Set realistic goals
- Set STG and LTG
- Set daily practice goals
- Set goals within your control
- Set both process and outcome goals
- Write down your goals
- Follow up your goals



3. Arousal



- Ideal Performance State (ZOF)
- Fine line between feeling anxious to compete and arousal before a competition

Think about writing an exam/test.



If you didn't prepare properly, how does this make you feel?

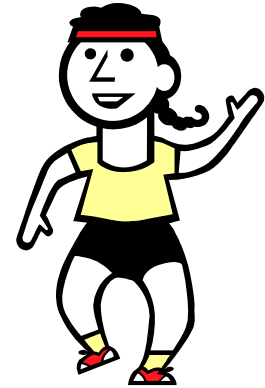
Think about a competition.



If you didn't prepare properly, how does this make you feel?



Anxiety



- Cognitive (mind)
- Worry
- Apprehension
- Loss of concentration
- Decline in decision making skills
- Somatic (body)
- Increased HR
- Sweating
- Shaking
- Nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Dizzy
- Sleepy
- Muscle tension

Tools: Managing Your Arousal

- Relaxation exercises
 - Breathing/Biofeedback
 - PMR
- Alternatively, psyching up exercises
 - Music
 - Images
 - Words
 - Physical warm up

4. Focus/Attention

- What are the critical moments in your sport?
- Anxiety (tunnel vision) and fatigue are 2 factors affecting concentration.
- What are some distractions you have in your sport?
 - Which are internal and which are external?



Tools: Improving Your Focus

- Pre-Competitive Routine
 - Allows for a sense of calm
 - Eliminates distractors
 - Allows for control over the environment
- Clock Face exercise

5. Positivity & Defeating Fears



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Think about what you are fearful of in your sport or what brings about negative thoughts/feeling?

losing,
embarrassing
myself, letting my
coach and others
down



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Why are we negative?

1. **Perfection is essential**
2. **Catastrophizing**
3. **Worth depends on achievement**
4. **Personalization**
5. **Fallacy of fairness and ideal conditions**
6. **Blaming**
7. **Polarized thinking**
8. **One-trial generalization**

Tools: Making Weaknesses Temporary

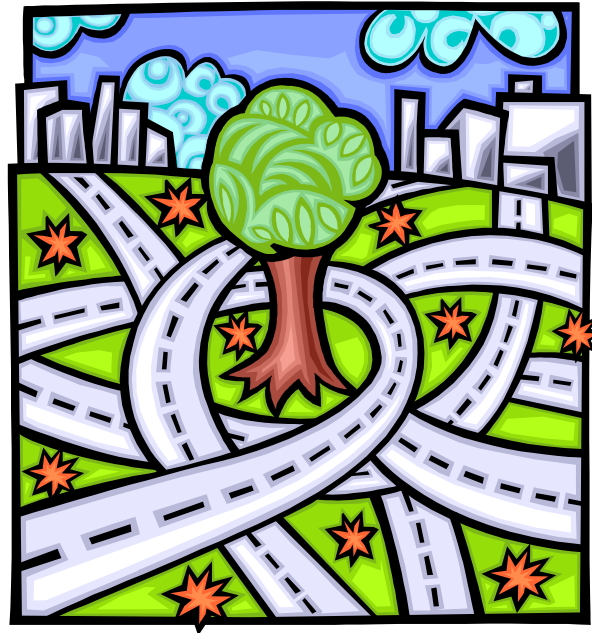
Whenever I try my best I come up short!	I had a chance to win today but let up in the last 15 meters
The coach never gives me positive feedback!	Coach gave me positive feedback yesterday, perhaps I haven't done anything worthy of praise today
I just can't do it!	I haven't been able to do it yet
She/He is impossible to beat!	She/he is a good athlete but I really improved in practice these last few weeks
I am a total head case!	I let my nerves get the better of me this time
I cannot perform at this track!	This track affects all athletes the same today.

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Tools: Making Success Permanent

I was so lucky to win	I raced really well
No wonder I won, there was no competition	I won because I trained hard and was ready. I deserve this
I only won because Jane/Jim had a sore shoulder	Eventhough she/he was hurt, I made she/he work. I deserve to move on to the next race
My opponent got tired at the end	I'm in great condition
Luck was on my side today	I made the breaks I got today. I create my own luck
My toughest opponent didn't compete well today	With a competition like today, I can beat anyone they put against me

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