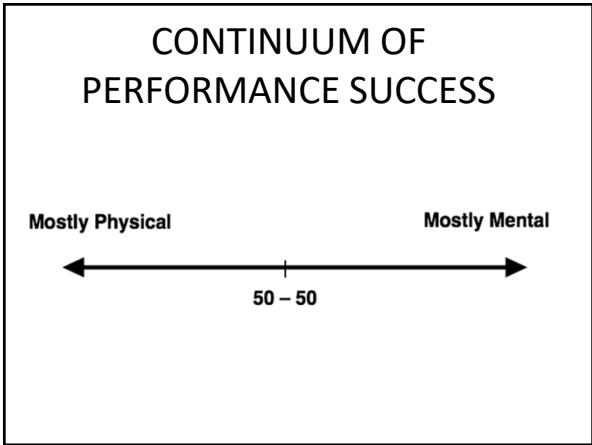
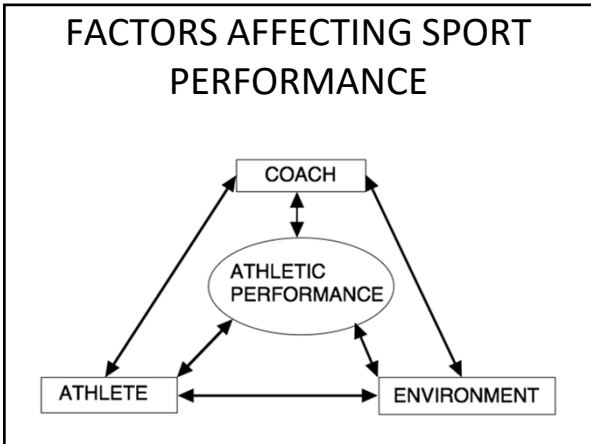


**The Competitive Edge:
 Getting It, Keeping It**

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WHAT IS THE COMPETITIVE EDGE?

- Mental Toughness
- Mental Skills Training (MST)
- Process vs. Outcome (Mastery)
- In-born or Learned?
- Can YOU Learn This????

MENTAL TOUGHNESS

- Self-motivated & self-directed
- Positive but realistic • Determined
- Able to manage own emotions
- Calm & relaxed under fire
- Highly energetic & ready for action
- Mentally alert & focused
- Doggedly self-confident
- Fully responsible

MENTAL SKILLS TRAINING

- Goal Setting
- Imagery & Visualization
- Focus & Concentration
- Relaxation & Stress Management
- Motivation
- Confidence

HOW TO IMPLEMENT MENTAL TRAINING

Discuss your approach – Athlete & Coach

Assess current status of mental skills

Decide which skills to include

Design a schedule (time–line)

Evaluate program and delivery

Add Mental Training Everywhere!

THREE PHASES TO MST PROGRAMS:

Education Phase

Acquisition Phase

Practice Phase

WHEN TO IMPLEMENT PST

Off–Season & Pre–Season

Why not Mid–Season?

Why not after a 'crisis'?

COMMON PROBLEMS IN MST

Lack of conviction

Lack of time

Lack of sport knowledge

Lack of follow-up

MYTHS ABOUT MST PROGRAMS

Its difficult to implement

Mental skills are unchangeable

Takes too much time (away from physical practice)

Only for 'problem' athletes'

Only for 'elites'

Provides a 'Quick Fix' solution

MST is not useful

GOAL SETTING GUIDELINES:

Performance vs. Outcome

Challenging vs. Easy

Realistic vs. Unrealistic

Specific vs. General

GOAL SETTING II: HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Be realistic – but considerate
- Use combination of short, intermediate, long-term goals
- Provide accurate positive feedback!!
- Gain athlete's 'acceptance'
- Reassess strategy if necessary

IMAGERY & VISUALIZATION

- Mental Practice – Skill Acquisition
- Precompetition Rehearsal
- Success Imagery
- Coping Strategy Images

GUIDELINES FOR USING IMAGERY

- Practice Imagery on a regular basis
- Use all senses to enhance image vividness
- Develop Imagery control
- Use both internal and external perspectives
- Facilitate Imagery through relaxation
- Develop coping strategies through Imagery
- Use Imagery in practice as well as for competition

GUIDELINES FOR USING IMAGERY II

- Use video or audio to enhance Imagery skills
- Use triggers or cues to facilitate Imagery quality
- Emphasize dynamic kinesthetic Imagery
- Imagine in real time
- Use Imagery logs

RELAXATION & STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Release stress through physical activity
- Avoid using the 'relax' command
- Stop self-focusing
- Promote task familiarity
- Avoid discussing opponent's times/record
- Simulate competition in practice
- Respond to an injury
- Individualize mental strategies
- Build self-confidence
- Keep errors in perspective

ATHLETE ANXIETY MANAGEMENT

- Focus on what you can control
- Think practice
- Remember the worst-case scenario
- Keep active
- Use cognitive strategies
- Learn & practice breathing control

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Questions, comments,
feedback...

Thank You!!

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