

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY

with

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MIND AND BODY BALANCE

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GOAL SETTING

- Specific and measurable
- Difficult but realistic
- Set short as well as long term goals
- Set performance goals as opposed to outcome goals
- Set goals for practice as well as competition
- Set positive goals as opposed to negative goals
- Identify target dates
- Identify goal achievement
- Evaluate goals
- Provide support for goals



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NAME _____ SMART Outcome Goal(s) _____

SMART PROCESS

ACTION PLAN

1. TECHNICAL

2. TACTICAL

3. PHYSICAL

4. MENTAL

5. EXTERNAL

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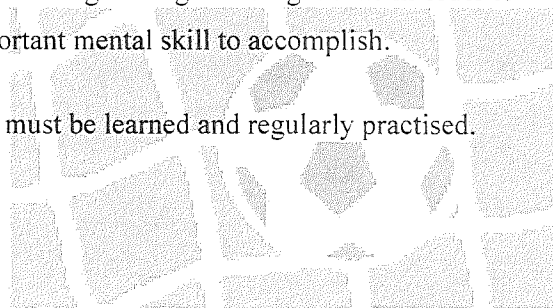
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CONCENTRATION - THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL AND CONSISTENT PERFORMANCE

Few athletes would doubt that the ability to focus one's attention on the right thing at the right time in order to complete the task at hand is one - if not the most valuable and important mental skill to accomplish.

The ability to focus or attend to task relevant cues is a skill, thus it must be learned and regularly practised.



TYPES OF CONCENTRATION

According to Dr Robert Nidiffer, author of (The Inner Athlete) your attentional process consists of two dimensions: width and direction. Your width of attentional focus falls along a continuum from very broad on one end to very narrow on the other extreme. Your direction of focus also fits into a continuum that interacts with your width of focus. On one hand, you can have a completely external focus (i.e., all your attention is on external objects like the ball), on the other hand, in an extremely internal focus, your entire focus is on your own feelings, thoughts, ideas, etc.

CONCENTRATIONAL ERRORS YOU CAN MAKE WHILE PLAYING FOOTBALL

1. Internal Overload: Internal overload occurs when there are a lot of thoughts going through the players head. They are thinking too much! Such thoughts may be related to coaching points, negative self talk etc. When this occurs the athlete needs to focus their attention on something external. They need to become process rather than outcome oriented. Get back to basics!
2. External Overload: External overload occurs where there is an excess of noise from the surrounding environment e.g. crowd. etc. Engaging in refocusing skills involving breathing and imagery may assist in enhancing the players concentration under the above conditions.
3. Extreme Narrowing: Extreme narrowing of concentration is most common in intense pressure situations. This type of concentrational error is commonly referred to as "Choking". To overcome such situations players need to adopt the use of triggers e.g. specific positive action oriented key words and/or colours.

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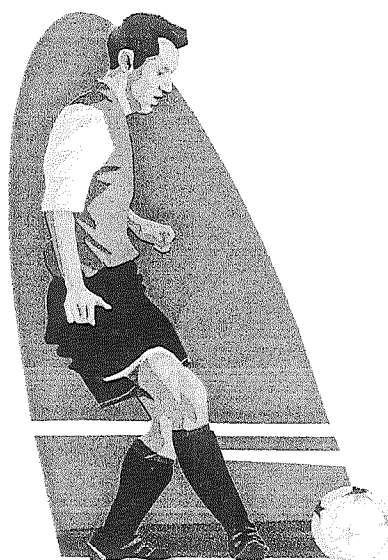
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KEYS TO MASTERING CONCENTRATION

- Develop goals
- Develop plans and back up plans
- Develop routines, warm-up routine
- Be in control, don't rush
- Be process oriented - get back to basics
- Use your down time
- Combine relaxation and imagery skills with concentration skills

THE CONSISTENT CONTROL OF ONE'S ATTENTIONAL FOCUS BEFORE, AND DURING MATCHES SIMPLY REQUIRES REGULAR PRACTICE, DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT.



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WHAT IS IMAGERY?

1. Everyone differs in their ability to imagine. Some can create images very vividly in great detail. Others experience very little.
2. The ability to use imagery is a learned skill. The more you practise, the better you get.
3. Imagery is the connecting link between mind and body in performance. It represents the most effective system of communication between mental desires and physical performance.

Under what conditions will your imagery be most powerful?

- * When you are in a quiet, non-distracting environment.
- * When your mind is quiet and your body is relaxed.
- * When you set aside feelings, thoughts and desires that are unrelated to imagery.
- * When you imagine in colour.
- * When you imagine in as much detail as possible.
- * When you utilize your sense of smell, thought, feel and hearing.
- * Frequent repetition and practise.



See it, believe it, achieve it!

It is a fact that the nervous system cannot distinguish between a real experience/skill, for example an ideal performance, and a vividly imagined turn. The neural pathways for this real and imagined skill are the same.

Thus, it is not uncommon for an athlete regularly practises imagery to experience muscle twitches and other sensations, which are similar to that produced by actual physical execution.

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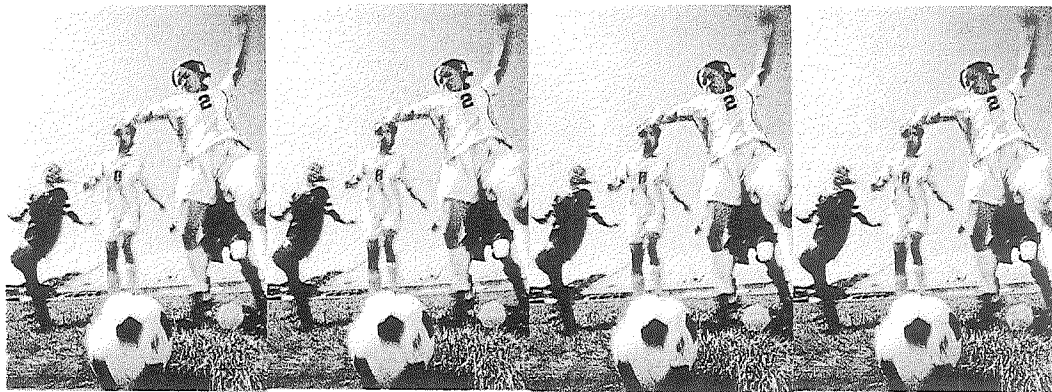
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6. Use all your senses in creating a positive image. For example, see the layout/surroundings of the venue. What you would feel, e.g. your movements, balance, and strength in your body. Hear what you would hear smell the smells you would smell, taste the familiar tastes. Imagining the performance perfectly also requires the use of the appropriate time frame, i.e. the speed at which the performance would take. Images should be in colour.
7. Practise positive imagery consistently and regularly. The best times to practise skills are at all training sessions, before practice sessions, for approximately three to four times a week for 2 x 5 minute sessions each day or longer if appropriate. It is best not to use imagery before going to sleep as a vivid imagination will evoke experiences similar to that of real life. Imagery should become an important part of your pre-performance and performance routine, as it assists you in creating the correct skills/technique.
8. Evaluate your progress regularly.

Like all skills, imagery requires dedication, commitment and the essential ingredient of regular practise. If the above aspects are employed, the rewards will result.



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