Mind Over Muscle?

Mastering Psychological Skills in and out of the Pool
What’s the Power of 1%?

• 2007 FINA World Swimming Championships 40 gold medals were won during competition. 28 of these were won with a margin of less than one percent!

• The largest winning margin was 2.91 %.

• The smallest winning margin was 0.031%.
What outcome would you achieve if you could improve your performance by 1% everyday?
How Does Your Mind Work?

Thoughts → Feelings → Actions
The Right Focus

Athletic Performance

CONTROLLABLE
YOUR Thoughts
YOUR Actions
YOUR Feelings

UNCONTROLLABLE
“Everything Else”
Parents
Coaches
Medals/Trophies
Records
Times
Other Athletes
Recipe for Success

No Short Cuts!
(Training Performance Every Day)
+
Confidence Is Doing
(Task Specific Confidence)
+
I Have to be Tough, Confident & Robust
(Global Self Confidence)
Staircase to Success
Why do you need psych skills?

• Champion athletes are not extraordinary people they are ordinary people who do extraordinary things.

• Top performers in any sport have well-developed physical and technical skills, and they are fit and healthy, what separates the best from the others is they can RELAX, BE POSITIVE, SHOW CONFIDENCE & STAY FOCUSED.
A PST Programme

A PST programme for young athletes has three goals:

1. To help the athlete to perform consistently to the best of their ability – performance enhancement.
2. To help the athlete enjoy sports participation more by reducing stress and improving performance.
3. To help the athlete develop psychological skills such as stress management for use in other life situations.
PST Methods

- Goal Setting
- Mental Preparation
- Self-talk
- Centering/relaxation
- Imagery
Performance vs Arousal

“THE ZONE”

Too Chilled
Out 😞

Too Stressed
Out 😞
Goal Setting

• Focus on performance goals and not outcome goals.
• Set long term, medium term and short term goals – 123 Model
• Set positive not negative goals
• Goals should be out of reach but not out of sight – be realistic.
• Share your goals – it makes them real.
• REVIEW YOUR GOALS REGULARLY
Beware of Diminishing Returns!

- The Law of diminishing returns states that as you get closer to your goal you have to work harder and longer to achieve smaller gains.
- If you are 13yrs+ this law may start to apply to your swimming.
- DON’T give in, be realistic in your expectations and CHALLENGE yourself to work harder.
Mental Preparation

• Mental preparation refers to developing systems to ensure optimum mental activation and concentration when you need it.

• Planning is the key to good mental preparation. Different types of plans include: Pre-Performance Plans, Performance Focus Plans, Coping Plans
Mental Preparation Cont…

• To prepare mentally you need to ask and answer the following questions…
• What kind of preparation do I like?
• What do I like and dislike about competition?
• Do I already have a warm-up routine for competition day?
• Do I have a clearly defined race plan?
• Does anything make me anxious before competition?
• How disciplined is my focus and concentration?
Self Talk

• Self talk is best described as your internal monologue or inner conversations.

• You can use self talk for:
  – Skill Learning “Accelerate towards the turn”
  – Concentration “Right now!”
  – Creating Mood “Go, Explode!”
  – Controlling Effort “Go for it, push it”
  – Affirmations “You can do this, your fit and strong”
Centering/Relaxation

- Centering is a relaxation and concentration exercise where you focus on breathing from your centre of gravity, combining abdominal breathing and key words. Practice in a relaxed setting first and then use during practice and training.
- Progressive muscle relaxation is another method which encourages DEEP relaxation
Imagery

• Imagery is a PST method which involves the athlete imagining situations, skills, people and objects in their mind.

• Basketball Study

• Start with guided practices to develop clear and vivid images: hear the crowd, smell the chlorine, feel the water, feel your muscles contract…

• Self-directed imagery is the next step and can even be timed once well practiced
Good Luck!