

# Building mental preparation into everything you

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Something other than size must matter



# How do mental skills get developed

- By experience – though this can be random
- Through workshops/seminars/sessions with players – this method is useful but getting enough time is problematic
- 1 on 1 between players and coach/sport psych
- Self analysis and self study
- At Work(training) - Through a systematic and planned approach to training, that integrates mental, physical, technical and tactical factors – can be very time efficient and specific

# What happens when we go to training?

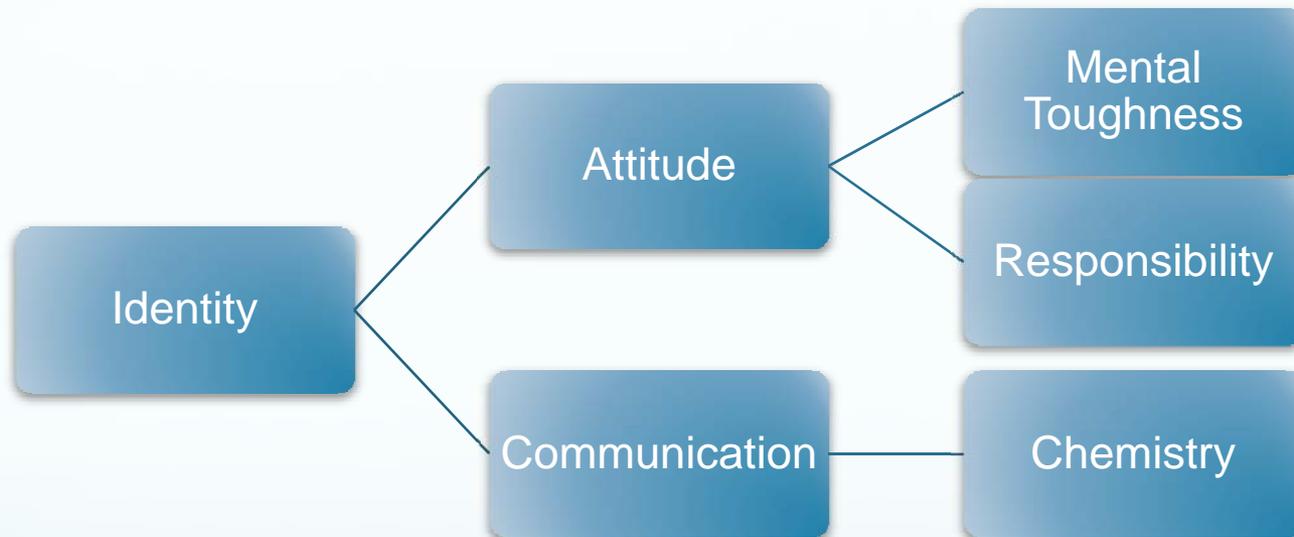
- Not a lot of work gets done
- Work is done sporadically
- Work only happens for a short time or a specific activity (game at the end, shooting drills)
- There are intermittent bouts of quality work
- Some time after training has started, work, gradually begins to get done
- Work is done for the duration of practice
- We start working before training begins and stay working for a while after it finishes
- We take work home with us

# What can get done at work (training)

Awareness of the mental abilities that can be developed during every moment of practice is the key

- Identity
- Attitude
- Communication
- Personal responsibility (no excuses)
- Chemistry
- Mental skills/goals/mental toughness/routines

# Model of Mental Components



# Link these items

## Mindset

## At practice

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- The diagram consists of two columns of bullet points. The left column is titled 'Mindset' and the right column is titled 'At practice'. Blue arrows connect items between the two columns, showing relationships. For example, 'Performance routines' connects to 'Before you leave for training' and 'Before you arrive early'. 'Positive competitive attitude' connects to 'Pre practice/closed skills/frees' and 'What you want out of practice'. 'Focus and refocus' connects to 'How you will get better'. 'Commitment to goals' connects to 'What you must do to get better'. 'Visible desire to improve' connects to 'This is a constant at training'. 'Visualization' connects to 'When you make mistakes'. 'Verbal and non verbal communication skills' connects to 'What is your reaction to things that go right and wrong'. 'Self talk/ cognitive restructuring' connects to 'What happens at the end of practice'. 'No excuses' connects to 'How do you portray yourself'. 'Discipline' connects to 'Pressure situations'. 'Work ethic' connects to 'How do you portray yourself'.
- Performance routines
  - Positive competitive attitude
  - Focus and refocus
  - Commitment to goals
  - Visible desire to improve
  - Visualization
  - Verbal and non verbal communication skills
  - Self talk/ cognitive restructuring
  - No excuses
  - Discipline
  - Work ethic
- Before you leave for training
  - Before you arrive early
  - Pre practice/closed skills/frees
  - What you want out of practice
  - How you will get better
  - What you must do to get better
  - This is a constant at training
  - When you make mistakes
  - What is your reaction to things that go right and wrong
  - What happens at the end of practice
  - How do you portray yourself
  - Pressure situations

# Practice Plan

6.45 - Pre practice – Individual work on weaknesses (talk time with players and their role/performance)

7.00 - Warm-up – Reinforce goals of session

7.15 - Individual skills/drills – use self talk, work on specific part of skills

7.35 - Game related skills/unit work - problem solving, communication skills, attitude work

7.55 – Tactical work/offenses, dealing with opponents strength & weaknesses – decision making, mental rehearsal, refocusing

8.15 - Time and score situations/situation simulation training – focus, refocus, 3E's (engage, encourage, enforce), centering, routines, no excuses, body language.

8.25 - Conditioned game – all of the above repeated

8.50 - Pressurized Shooting competition – dealing with distraction and pressure

8.55 - Cool down – individualized positive reinforcement

9.00-9.10 - Extra work for anyone

## Pre-requisites for effective training

- Have individual and team goals clearly displayed
- Create a practice environment/culture that has energy, fun and a sense of work being done
- A high intensity level is a given (unless otherwise stated)
- Players come with a clear idea of what they want to improve and leave with an attitude of positive reflection on how they did (staff must therefore engage with them)
- Create end of game situation in most practices so they learn how to react
- Everything (almost) is for a specific time, score, or distance. Measure as much as possible
- There must be a high level of communication between players, between staff and between players and staff **CONSTANTLY**. Nobody must ever feel they don't belong
- Communication must be practiced in training (short, precise, blunt)

# Every Team Needs an Identity

- What can you as a team do better than any other team in your league (3-4 things). It must be clearly visible to everyone that you do this. This is your identity
- Knowing about it does not mean we are doing it
- Have your core message displayed everywhere
- Some people are there to see what they can do for the team, some to see what the team can do for them, and some are just “there”. They must be part of the identity
- Equal opportunity (to get better) but equal treatment????? We don't run equal opportunity offenses so players must know their role and accept it. They must know where they stand all the time
- Does everyone buy in? Assumptions are the mother of all F--- ups

# Have a core message about who you are

“Ta ghaisca an mheitheal nois fearr na glor an aonraigh”  
(Irish Basketball Team)

(The needs of the group are more important than individual glory)

**Break it down so it has meaning and its something they view as having a purpose**

# Communication

## The Problems

- Use of words
- Is consistently cited as a major problem area
- Requires skill on everyone's part
- Lack of assertiveness, too much aggression or non assertive behavior
- Body language is under rated
- Fear
- Mixed messages
- Short listening time

## The solutions

- Challenge & change clichés
- Have clear concepts
- Teach them how to effectively reinforce in games
- Emphasis on “what to do” and not “what should have been done”
- Avoid – don't, shouldn't, couldn't, can't, etc
- Everyone must understand that “they are always saying something”
- 3 E's: Engage –Encourage-Enforce

Every word you speak has immense power

Listen to the words that you speak and you will find every limitation you have ever experienced revealed to you

# Words are the Manager/Coach's biggest tool

Think of "self-confidence"

What did you see?



**Now thats what I call self confidence!**

Words represent a concept but everyone has a different picture of every concept. You must know that the players are getting the concept you intend

Woody Hayes (Ohio State) ran word classes for his players in pre-season so everyone understood what he meant when he talked about “intensity, character, apathy, team” etc.

Clichés and swear words become nothing more than “static” to players and can cause them to tune out at critical times by acting as internal distracters

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Academic  
Counselor



"Yes, we teach it here, but I doubt if 'Women's Studies' is what you think it is."

# Communication (verbal and non verbal behavior, and listening)

Purpose is to help coaches gain a higher level of performance in their players, through

“Understanding the individual by identifying their motivational and working traits through the players verbal and non verbal language and behaviour”

Our non-verbal is more honest than our verbal

Clermont example (Verger 2008) – Game plans

Time to game	2 days before	Day before	Before game
Coach to whole team communication	15-20 mins	5-10 mins	150-200 words

# Helping the coaches

## Individual discussions with the players

1. The injured players and the players that don't play
2. The players in difficulty (management of work, relationships, agents)
3. The players in the doubt about their sports future (management of a phase of transition)
4. The players who are over aggressive
5. The players attempting to reach their potential
6. The questioning of the team collectively to get an understanding of the teams cohesion
7. The players not getting the job done

Profiles	Mental and physical	Technical and tactical	Other
Constructive evaluation	Conditioning coach, sport psych, coach and player	Coaching staff and player	Player and other

How many things were said here?  
The words of an entire nation!



# Attitude (mindset)

- Attitude = feelings, beliefs, and behaviours. All 3 must be consistent
- Growth attitude/mindset V. Fixed attitude/mindset
- “Say what you feel, believe what you say, then do it”
- What is a weak attitude – “saying something different from what you feel, you have little belief in what you said, so you don’t get it done.
- Very important when you play great talent – “doing enough is not always enough”

# Attitude

- Attitude has the power to lift a team or to tear it down
- Great Talent + Rotten Attitudes = Bad Team
- Great Talent + Bad Attitudes = Average Team
- Great Talent + Average Attitudes = Good Team
- Great Talent + Good Attitudes = Great Team

“The only thing more contagious than a good attitude is a bad attitude”

# Teamwork is a question of ATTITUDE



**TEAMWORK**

Share Victory. Share Defeat.

# The Catalyst

“Winning Teams have players that make things happen”

There are three types of players

- Players who don't want the ball. In high pressure situations these players don't have the ability to come through and don't want the responsibility. They must play in areas of their strengths.
- Players who want the ball but shouldn't. These players can't carry the team to victory but they don't know that they can't. Their ego is greater than their talent and that makes them dangerous to the team.
- Players who want the ball and should. These are the “Go To” players. They can take the team to another level. They are the **catalyst**
- The catalyst has great vision. Their compass is always set on true north and nothing deviates them from their goal.

“Games are won by **Get-It-Done-And-Then-Some-Players**”

# “Catalyst or “Impact players” have

- Have a growth attitude/mindset
- Capacity to focus intensely
- Ability to handle intense pressure
- Achievement orientated with a high level of competitive aggression
- Constant will to improve
- Good decision making ability
- Have mental skills they can use

# Personal Responsibility and the captains

- Every player is responsible for how they think, feel and act
- Captains may need leadership training. Meet every week for a short period to develop leadership skills

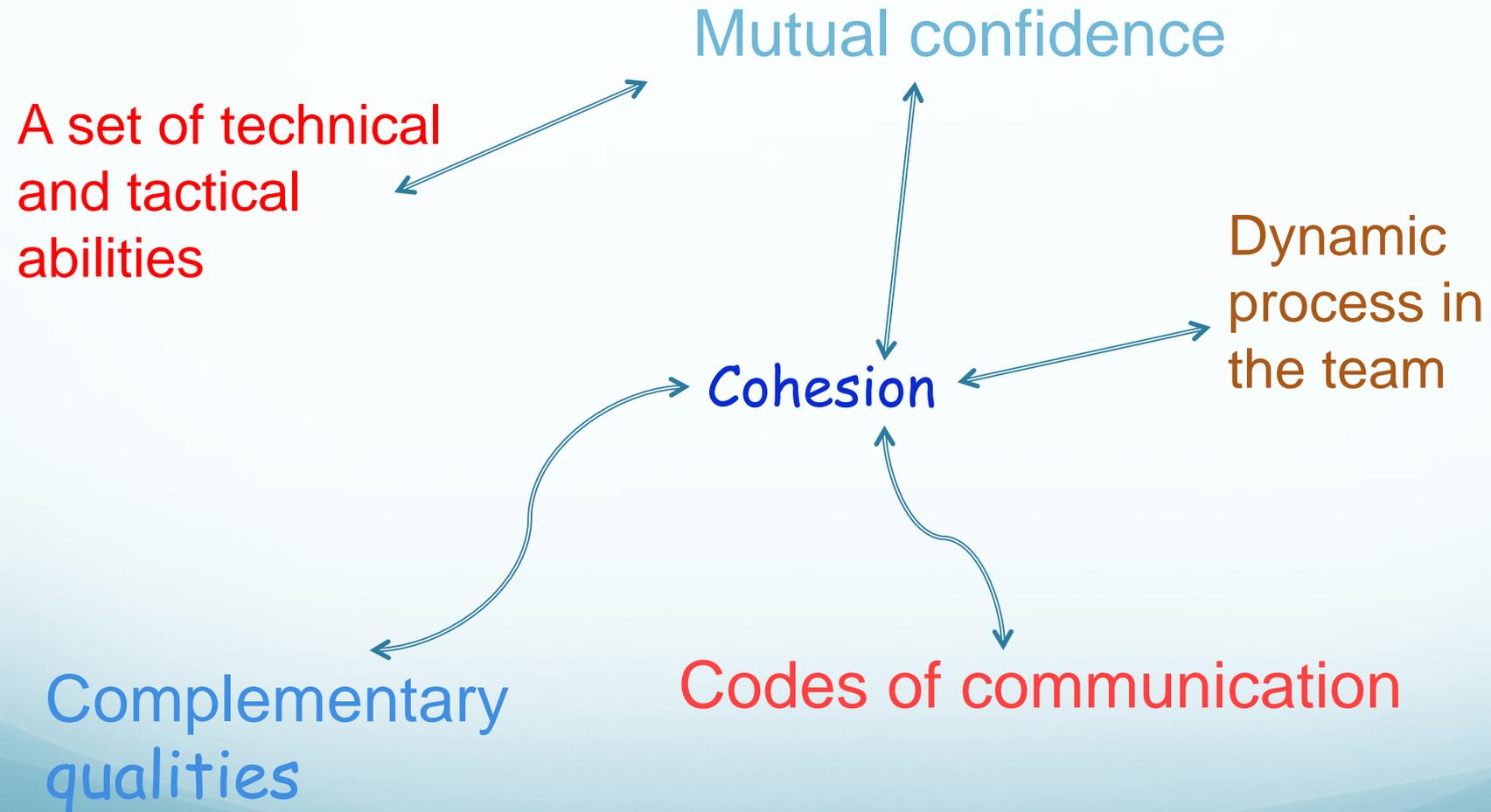
What is the captains role???

1. Aspects relating to setting goals
2. Aspects relating to communication with management
3. Aspects relating to controlling the team environment

# Captains as leaders

It is better to have an army of sheep led by a lion than an army of lions led by a sheep. Dionetius (478 B.C.)

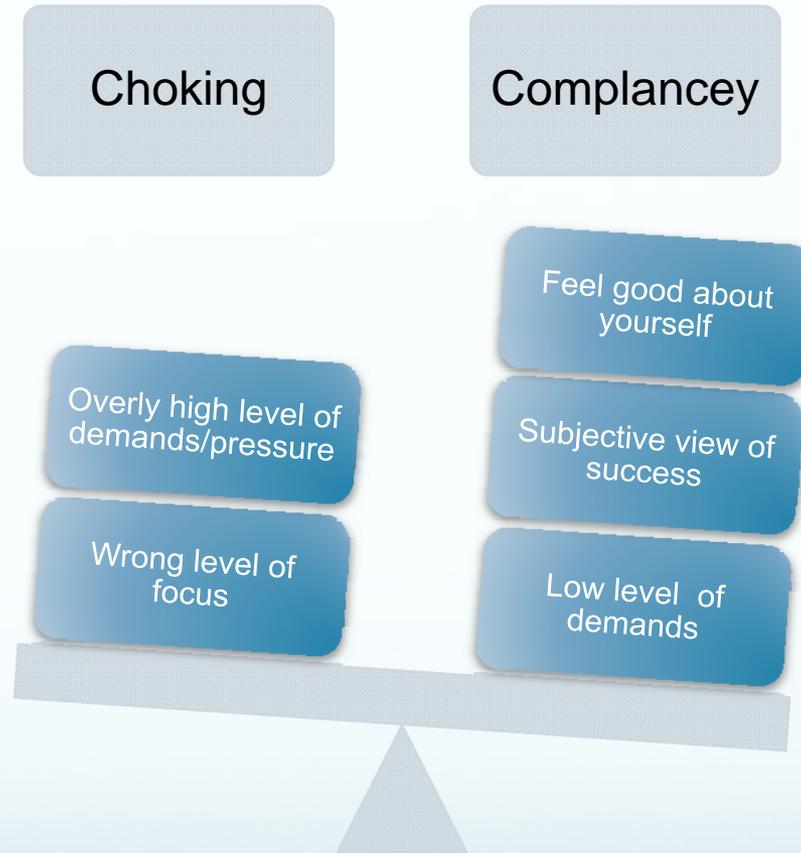
# Team Chemistry



Chemistry has to be good in highly emotive situations



# Getting the balance right



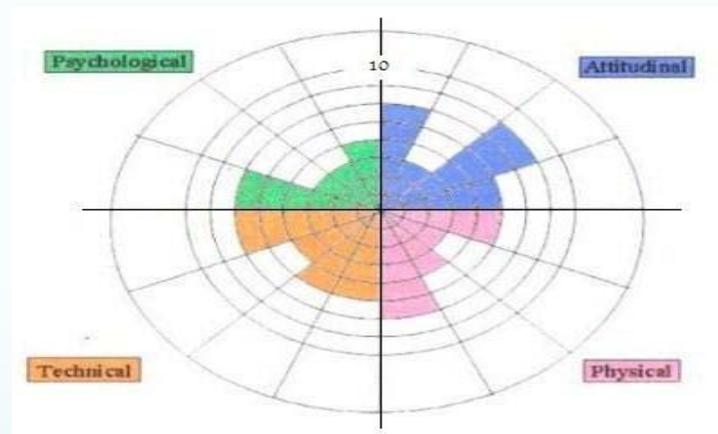
# Perform under pressure



# Mental Toughness and Mental Skills

- *Having the natural or developed psychological edge that enables you to, generally, cope better than your opponents with the many demands (competition, training, lifestyle) that sport places on a performer and, specifically, be more consistent and better than your opponents in remaining determined, focused, confident, and in control under pressure”. (Jones, 2007)*

- *Profile your players*



- *There is a difference between being willing to work hard and being eager to work hard*
- *There is a difference between the will to win and the will to prepare to win*

# 7 Stage Mental Toughness Cycle

**Goal Setting** How good is your outcome, process and performance goal setting

**Confidence** Having a robust self-belief and a positive attitude

**Visualization** Develop vivid and controllable skills

**Handling Pressure** Knowing how to control your nerves

**Team Role** Having role clarity and role acceptance

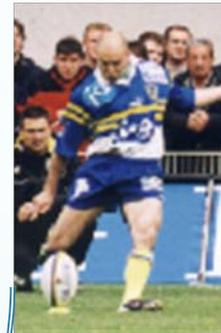
**Focus** Establishing good level of focus and refocusing

**Match Day Prep** Having good routines and practice “what ifs”



# Routine for the penalty taker

Cut the minute into small periods, to place mental tools at the disposal of the penalty taker .



Relaxation  
Self talk  
Mental imagery  
Attention  
Focus on my movement  
Kinesthetics adjustments

“Know what you believe instead of believing  
what you know”  
(French philosopher, Andre Comte-Sponville)

“Negative emotions are like monkeys, and your positive  
virtues are like bananas. If you don’t shut the door on the  
monkeys, they will get in and eat all the bananas”  
(Barman at the Anchor pub)

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*"The bad news is that  
you have Multiple Personality Disorder—  
the good news is  
one of you is hitting .432."*