

Signature Sport Psychology Techniques

That Link Theory and Practice

6th Annual Symposium

Sponsored by the
Performance Psychology Committee

Association for Applied Sport Psychology

Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA

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**Featuring the signature sport psychology techniques
of the following invited speakers:**

Sean McCann PhD

Bernie Holliday PhD

Louis Csoka PhD

Judy Van Raalte PhD

SIGNATURE TECHNIQUE INVITED SPEAKER BIO's

Sean McCann, Ph.D

Senior Sport Psychologist, USOC



Dr McCann has worked for the US Olympic Committee as a Sport Psychologist for 20 years, including 12 years as the head of the Department. He has traveled with the last 10 Olympic Teams as a sport psychologist during the Games. In his work for the USOC, he works directly with teams and coaches, from mental skills seminars and workshops about Olympic pressure, to individual sessions with athletes. Sean regularly works on the road with teams at training camps and competitions. Dr. McCann writes extensively about sport psychology, in a number of outlets, including refereed journals, book chapters, columns, brochures, and workbooks for Olympic Coaches and Athletes. Sean earned an undergraduate degree in psychology from Brown University, and a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Hawaii. He is a licensed psychologist in Colorado. In 2005, Dr. McCann received the Distinguished Professional Practice Award from AASP for outstanding contributions in applied sport psychology. In 2007, Sean was elected President of AASP.

Bernie Holliday, Ph.D., C.S.C.S.

Director of Mental Conditioning for the Pittsburgh Pirates organization



Full-time staff member for the Pirates and just completed 3rd season with the organization. Provide mental training services to coaches and players throughout the system from “big leagues” to “rookie ball”

Louis S. Csoka, Ph.D

President & Founder, Apex Performance, Inc



Dr. Csoka has been engaged in this line of work since 1989 when he created the Performance Enhancement Center (now known as CEP) at the US Military Academy at West Point. As a SVP for Human Resources in a \$6B global manufacturing company, Dr. Csoka led the transformation of the company's human resources function. Other roles have included Director of Research at The Conference Board and 21 years on the West Point faculty in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership as Professor of Psychology and Leadership. He served for 28 years in the US Army and led units in Germany, Holland, Korea, and as a Combat Commander in Vietnam. Dr. Csoka is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and holds an M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Washington. He is a member of AASP, AAPB, ISPI, ASTD, CNI.

Judy L. Van Raalte, Ph.D

Department of Psychology, Springfield College



Dr Van Raalte, is a Professor at Springfield College in MA, a member of the USOC Registry for Sport Psychologists and a Certified Consultant, Association of Applied Sport Psychology. She has provided sport psychology services to NCAA Division I, II and III teams and has extensively published and served the sport psychology community.

If there is an ideal mental state for competition- How do you get there?

Sean C. McCann, United States Olympic Committee

Introduction

The failure to execute under pressure is one of the primary causes for hiring a sport psychologist. The frustration of being unable to perform as well under greatest pressure, at the most important events, has even driven some athletes (and their coaches), out of sport altogether. Despite the central challenge of executing under pressure for sport psychology, there has been very little explicit work on teaching the skill of execution.

Purpose

Teach performers a model of execution that explains what happens when performers execute under pressure, and that gives performers an explicit, repeatable, path to follow.

Theory

The practical skill of "Execution Mode" is built upon theories of ideal mental state for performance, as well as theories of challenges to ideal mental state.

Key Readings on Ideal Mental State

Hanin, 1995 – IZOF Model
Gallwey, 1974 – The "Inner Game of Tennis"
Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi – 1999 – Flow In Sport

Key Readings on challenges to Ideal Mental state

Yerkes Dodson, 1908 – "Inverted U" arousal curve
Fazey and Hardey, 1988- Catastrophe Theory
Beilock, 2010 – "Choking"

Technique

Correcting misconceptions:

- Either have it or don't.
- "The zone" or flow happens regularly.
- Can use the same skills for high pressure.

Three Steps to execution Mode:

- 1) Step One- Answering questions
- 2) Step Two- Finding a focus
- 3) Step Three- Executing the focus

Step One- What questions are in your head as you prepare for a key performance?

Step Two- What are the critical questions that lead to your focus keys?

Step Three- What mental skills do you need to execute that focus?

Impacting the 21st Century Athlete and Unleashing the Beast Within

Bernie Holliday, Pittsburgh Pirates

Defining the Problem

1. iY Generation (born in the 1990's) – “Jekyll and Hyde” Generation
 - a. The 21st Century ballplayer is a different breed
 - i. To all old school coaches: “Are you evolving, or are you just getting old?”
 - ii. Don't change the values, change how you teach them
 - b. The Death of Sandlot
 - i. Spontaneous play replaced by structured activity and coached skill development
 - ii. Instinct is atrophying in today's athlete
 - iii. “Play the game” versus “work the game”
 - c. Baseball is a game, not a swing or a delivery
 - i. The hostile takeover of swing and delivery gurus
 - ii. Practice the way you play: Mechanical preoccupation becomes the default
 - iii. Bruce Lee interview: Too much control results in a “mechanical man” confined by mechanical preoccupation, impaired instinct, and limited responsiveness

Identifying a Solution

1. EPIC guidelines to teach iY Generation's EPIC learners
 - E Experiential (iY wants an experience before an explanation)
 - P Participatory (iY wants a guide on the side before a sage on the stage)
 - I Image-Rich (iY wants to see it before they say it) believe
 - C Connected (iY wants to belong before they believe)

2. The “Trusting Mindset” and Training the Trust
 - a. “The psychology that brings skill in is different than the psychology that lets skill out”
 - i. “Training Mindset”
 1. Psychology that brings skill in
 2. Mental Approach: Analysis, criticism, and judgment
 3. Type of Effort: Work hard, try hard, think carefully about it
 4. Benefit: Strengthens competence (skill building)
 - ii. “Trusting Mindset”
 1. Psychology that lets skill out
 2. Mental Approach: Conviction, reckless abandon, absolute acceptance
 3. Type of Effort: Play hard, try easy, and don't think
 4. Benefit: Strengthens confidence (trust building)
 - b. In theory...Training Mindset ideal for practice, Trusting Mindset ideal for competition
 - c. In actuality...This is WRONG! You must “train the trust” like any other skill

Bridging Strategies to “Train the Trust”

3. How athletes can “Train the Trust”
 - a. Know your “Hedgehog”
 - i. What can you be the best in the clubhouse/league at?
 - ii. What do you love doing on the field?
 - iii. What can you build a career around?
 - b. Live by your “10 Competitive Commandments”
 - i. This becomes a player's competitive philosophy and guides his day-to-day thoughts and actions, similar to how a coaching philosophy guides a coach's decision-making at practice and competition.
 - ii. “It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.” – Muhammad Ali

- iii. Read it daily, Listen to it daily, Visualize it daily, Live it daily
 - c. "Hunt the Good Stuff"
 - i. Tony Gwynn story
 - 1. Good ABs: Record any (a) good AB, (b) good swing, and (c) good hit
 - 2. Poor ABs: "Watch 'em once, then click 'em out"
 - d. See it, Feel it, Trust it
 - i. Replace mechanical sequences with the feeling of quality movement
 - ii. See it, Feel it, Trust it (Cook, 2009)
4. How coaches can "Train the Trust"
- a. Example: Pittsburgh Pirates Player Development
 - i. Second Half of 2012 Season – "Trusting Mindset", Confidence, Trust, Instinct
 - 1. Mondays Theme: Questions
 - 2. Tuesdays Theme: Strengths and Speaking Greatness
 - 3. Wednesdays Theme: Opponent-Specific Preparation
 - 4. Thursdays Theme: External Focus and Competition
 - 5. Fridays Theme: Chaos and Risk

Key Readings

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Sports Illustrated, September 18, 1995

(Excerpts from story about how Gwynn used video to balance building competence and confidence)

...Still, Gwynn is sitting in front of his cubicle in Atlanta, rolling his bat in his hands and lamenting the poor, pitiful season he has been having, how he muddled around near .300 before he finally found his stroke. Even though he has clearly found it now, tonight, as always, Gwynn will take back to his hotel a tape he has made of the game on a small VCR he carries on the road and hooks up to clubhouse monitors. Then, with a second VCR he totes, he will transfer his at bats to another tape. He will actually edit those at bats onto three separate tapes -- one for good at bats, where he might have worked the count, fouled off tough pitches, just generally not gotten embarrassed; one of at bats with hits; and one of the swings that actually produced the hits. "If there are bad at bats on the tapes, I just click them out," he says. "Watch 'em once, click 'em out. You don't want to watch yourself looking like an idiot, waving at some curveball."

This system -- refined from his out-of-control, pre-expansion days when he carried 11 tapes on the road with his at bats against the 11 other National League teams -- was born in 1983, only a year later than his son Anthony, who now travels with the team during the summer. Tony and Alicia had purchased the camera gear to document Anthony's growth, but with Gwynn on the road and in a slump so profound that manager Dick Williams actually benched him, they found a more professional use for it. "I called home, told my wife to tape my at bats," says Gwynn. "Just hit the record button whenever I came to the plate. When I got home and looked at it, I saw right away what I was doing. I couldn't wait to get to the ballpark and correct it. Took me 15 swings. Hit .333 the rest of the year."

Since then he has gone to the tape more often than Marv Albert, and a legend has grown around Gwynn and his remote control. "It drives people crazy," he says. "It's tedious, splitting cables and everything, and I know it gets on people's nerves. But it works. In this game if you're successful, that means getting hits three out of 10 times. I'm trying to tap into the other 70 percent, and I don't mind doing it. It's not hard spending 20 minutes a day -- pause, record, fast forward." He's squeaking again. If there's more to the story, only dogs tuned into higher auditory registers can hear it...

...A hotel room, past midnight, blackout drapes drawn. The game is over, long over, the spread attacked, and the blue fluorescence of a television washes the dim walls. An announcer on the TV notices that Gwynn is well up in the batter's box, to take away the curve, obviously. "Interesting observation," says Gwynn. "I've only been standing there my whole life." The batter suddenly lines a shot up the middle that caroms off the pitcher, who recovers and throws the batter out. "Hits him in the shin and stays right in front of him!" shouts Gwynn. He calms. "Well, that was all you could do. I'm not embarrassed by that. Look, I'm rounding first base like I got a base hit."

The game is fast-forwarded, and, before you know it, Gwynn is at bat again, with a runner on third. The Atlanta pitcher has a 3-0 count on Gwynn. The papers the next day say Pedro Borbon fully intended to walk Gwynn. But it's hard to get anything hittable past a hitter who doesn't really acknowledge a strike zone. "It's a slider away," Gwynn says. "Not that bad a pitch for him, not that far outside. My whole assignment here is to go to left, don't even want to try and pull this guy." On TV, Gwynn swings inside out -- contact! -- and the ball is lined over short; the runner scores. The camera cuts to Brave manager Bobby Cox. Is he steamed! "That's exactly what I wanted to do," Gwynn says. "That was a good at bat for me." Tony Gwynn hunches over, the remote in his hand, bathed in this unnatural moonlight. He fast-forwards the tape. Pauses, dubs, fast-forwards. He hopes to find another good at bat, where the guy's not lunging at the ball, not waving at some stupid curve, not looking like an idiot. All the guy on the TV has to do is get the barrel on the ball, make contact. And maybe nobody will remember how foolish he looks the other, well, two thirds of the time.

"If there are bad at bats on the tapes, I just click them out."

Goal Setting – Programming the Brain

Dr. Louis Csoka, Apex Performance

Purpose

The purpose of our goal setting process is to emphasize key elements of a highly effective goal setting process that (1) identifies a clear Goal (target), (2) develops a Goal Plan that specifies an Outcome Goal, Performance Goals, and Process Goals, (3) incorporates affirmations to assist in the development of a mindset, and (4) uses some neuroscience principles to “program the brain” for success.

Theory

A highly effective goal setting process is based on the principles outlined by Locke & Latham (1990) wherein he detailed the Five Principles of Goal Setting. Burton, Naylor, & Holliday (2001) found that goal setting was effective for enhancing task-specific on-field behavior in a rugby union. Comprehensive review of goal setting literature demonstrates the generalizability of goal setting findings. (Burton, 1992, 1993; Burton et al, 2001; Weinberg, 1994) The literature has confirmed that goal setting is a highly consistent and robust performance enhancement strategy that works almost universally for participants across a variety of tasks and settings. (T.S. Horn, 2008)

Technique

There is goal setting and then there is goal setting! The literature is replete with varying techniques, some more successful than other, but most follow very similar paths in the process. This presentation takes goal setting to a whole new level by integrating biofeedback, self-talk and basic neuroscience in the development of a goal plan that works because it applies a mind-body approach to the process. Using the basics of identifying the outcome goal, performance goals, process goals, and affirmations, the resulting goal plan then serves as a script for guided imagery and programming self-talk. The entire goal script is then recorded as an audio file. Performers are then directed to listen to these audio files on a regular daily basis. The objective is to create a mindset around the desired goal and the path for achieving it by creating neural pathways through repetition. This is based on what we know about how children first learn language, through the repetition of words by parents and others around them.

Short instruction on...

- The history of goal setting as a motivational and performance enhancing tool
- The power of goals (why goals work)
- Barriers to effective goal setting
- Using SMART as a tool in developing goal statements
- Five goal setting principles (Locke & Latham)
 1. Clarity
 2. Challenge
 3. Commitment
 4. Feedback
 5. Task Complexity
- How to develop a written goal plan

- Developing a goal plan that incorporates a cascading goals process
 - Outcome Goal
 - Performance Goals
 - Process Goals
 - Affirmations

- Providing a professional recording of entire goal script that serves two purposes
 - (1) to provide a guided imagery script
 - (2) to enable auditory “programming” of a mindset

Self-Talk and Sport Performance: Myths, Facts, and Practice

Judy L. Van Raalte, Springfield College, Springfield, MA USA

Purpose

Understand the science related to self-talk and effectively self-talk in sport performance settings.

Theory

Self-talk has been identified as an important component of sport performance, one of the most widely used sport psychology interventions advocated by coaches and athletes (Gould, Hodge, Peterson, & Giannini, 1989; Hardy & Hall, 2006; Joseph, & Cramer, 2011; Wang, Huddleston, & Peng, 2003). There has been much discussion in the applied sport psychology literature about the benefits of reducing the use of negative self-talk (Zinsser, Bunker, & Williams, 2010) and about the relationship between self-talk and sport performance (Hatzigeorgiadis, Zourbanos, Galanis, & Theodorakis, 2011; Tod, Hardy, & Oliver, 2011). It has been noted that self-talk is a complex phenomena that can affect attentional focus, confidence, effort, cognitive and emotional reactions, automatic execution of tasks, and sport performance. Studies have shown that specific types of self-talk can be effective for some tasks more so than for others (Hatzigeorgiadis, Zourbanos, Galanis, & Theodorakis, 2011).

- Negative self-talk is related to worse performances for most athletes.
- Positive self-talk is associated with enhanced performance in the laboratory relative to negative self-talk but less so in sport settings.
- Instructional self-talk is least harmful to sport performance, especially if matched to skill level of athlete.
- Motivational self-talk is particularly effective for gross motor tasks requiring power rather than accuracy.
- Believing in self-talk is associated with greater self-talk benefits.
- Practicing self-talk leads to larger self-talk effects.

Thus, the nature of the performed task, the content of, and the experience with self-talk are all important in understanding the relationships between self-talk and performance.

Techniques

- Demonstrate self-talk's effect on performance (experiential activity).
- Note overall effects in the group and individual differences.
- Develop self-talk interventions related to individual, task, and desired self-talk.

Debrief

- Evaluate use of self-talk- is what was developed effective?
- What would be most effective for your sport?

Practice

- Use self-talk and modify as needed.

Key Readings

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