

2016 - 2017 Sport Psychology Update

As this season heads into the home stretch, I wanted to send a re-cap of what we've been doing in the sport psychology program, and how athletes can continue their **Mental Training** on their own through the end of the season.

Site Pools

At the site pools, I worked with athletes on re-learning and **managing anxiety**. Swimmers did a short breathing exercise to quiet the mind, and that related to being able to quiet the mind in the most intense, noisy, competitive environments. "**Circle breathing**" is one of the most effective **re-focusing cues** to quiet the mind.

To mentally train, athletes can practice their re-focusing cues until they become ingrained as habit.

Senior Group



(Senior Group doing "The Human Knot")

For the senior group the focus was more on **team building** than in previous years. The mix of interactive activity and classroom-style mental game training was a nice change of pace from previous years, and really helped the team bond and get to know each other better.

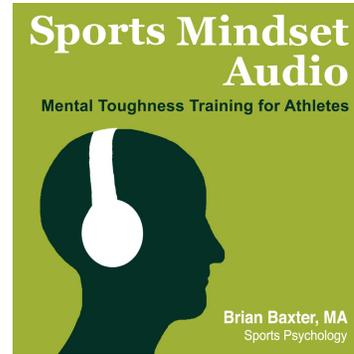
Our premise for mental training is to improve performance, no matter where you are in your swimming. The goal is to swim up to your potential consistently, especially at the bigger meets. We have centered the work on the equation:

$$\text{Thoughts} + \text{Emotions} + \text{Physiology} = \text{Performance}.$$

For mental training, **visualization** was the first sport psychology technique I taught, as it addresses all 3 elements of performance. We have incorporated visualization and team building into every session since.



(Visualization in October, when the weather is nice)



(My visualization program on iTunes)

Additional sport psychology techniques have been added throughout the year: Managing pre-race Anxiety, **Self Talk**, Motivation (team and individual), **Positive Body Language**, and **Focusing on the Controllables**.

To mentally train, athletes can continue to implement these techniques into their daily lives, training and competition. Each athlete has different needs, so it is important to be self-aware and disciplined in the process.

Parents

The mental game doesn't start and end with the athletes though! I enjoyed being able to facilitate a discussion at all the pools this year for parents. To be the best sports parent ever, we talked about the 6 Cs: Commitment, Clear Consistent Communication, Controllables, Comfort Zone, (Don't) Coach, and the Car ride home. Thanks for everyone who attended, asked questions, and shared their stories.

For more mental game training, remember that PAC athletes and families get 20% off individual services from SPINw. Contact us if you are interested: brian@spinw.com | 503-309-3347