



Special Olympics
British Columbia

Coach Diary

Table of Contents

A. MENTAL SKILLS - Being a better coach from the inside out.

- a. Reflective Practice
 - i. Weekly reflection worksheets
- b. Coaching Personality
- c. Coaching Philosophy

B. MENTAL SKILLS - How can I improve my effectiveness as a coach with athletes?

- a. Communication and Behaviours
- b. Supporting Athlete Motivation

C. MENTAL SKILLS - What more can I do as a coach?

- a. Coach Focus Plans
- b. Manage Distractions
- c. Coach Recovery

D. MENTAL SKILLS - Coaching at games

- a. Mental preparation tips for a major games
- b. Self-evaluation of coach effectiveness
- c. Learning at the Games
- d. Competition reflection form (to be developed)

MENTAL SKILLS

Being a better coach from the inside out

Reflective Practice

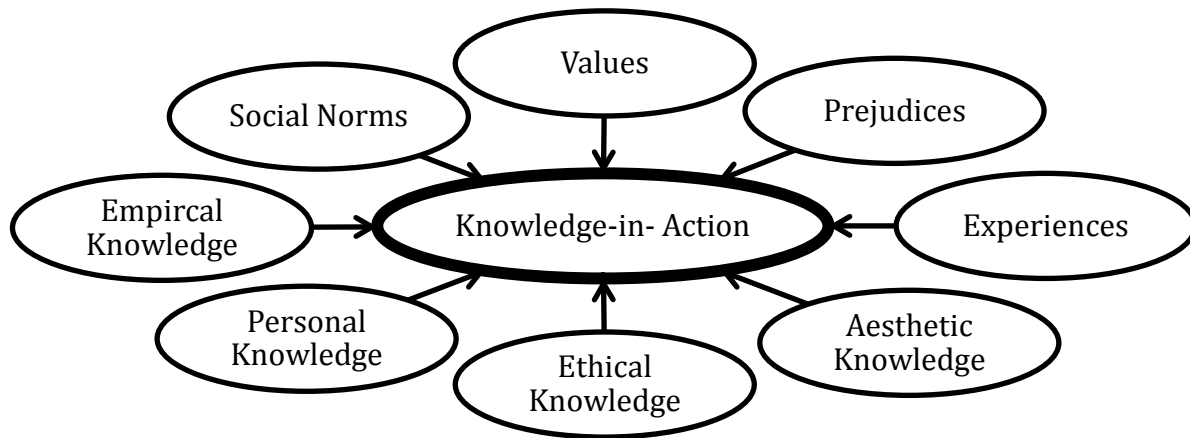
Coaching Personality

Coaching Philosophy

Reflective Practice

*“All people who excel are masters at drawing lessons from their experiences.
Without ongoing reflection and assessment there is little chance of ongoing growth.”
Terry Orlick*

Many coaches develop their skills and expertise through their experiences and by watching other coaches. However, simply acquiring experiences does not guarantee coaching competence. Knowledge within the coaching setting is a reflection of several factors.



It is the integration of experience and knowledge in a meaningful way that promotes learning and in turn develops expertise. Coaches need to know how to best learn through their experiences. Reflective practice is a major learning tool in this regard.

Reflective Practice

Reflective Practice

Reflection is at the heart of the learning process. It is a necessary component in learning how to regulate your thoughts, feelings and actions. Reflection links experience and knowledge by providing an opportunity to explore areas of concern in a critical way and to make adjustments based on these reflections. Reflective practice is a process that allows you to look at the ways in which you approach your tasks, collaborate with people, form assumptions, draw conclusions, and selectively attend to certain elements. This exploration enhances learning and promotes coaches' abilities to identify and respond to cues within themselves and within the environment effectively.

The **goal** of reflective practice is to gain new or deeper understandings of the self that leads to actions that improve performance.

Developing Reflective Coaches

Reflective practice can be a significant contributor to coach development. As a process, it needs to be integrated into day-to-day practice. Reflection skills in you can be developed and supported in a number of ways. Here a few suggestions:

A. Discussions

You can benefit from discussions with other coaches. These discussions provide a chance to reflect on current practice and be exposed to different approaches and experiences. Opportunities need to be created where you can engage in discussion around relevant and meaningful coaching issues. Monthly coach meetings, mentor-coach support, conferences, coaching clinics are just few avenues where discussions can occur.

B. Journals or Diaries

In a journal or diary you record your thoughts, feelings, questions and concerns related to your roles and responsibilities as a coach on a daily basis. You can share these entries later with mentor coaches or simply use them as ways to inform your own self- reflection and evaluation process.

C. Season Projects

At the beginning of the season, you can outline specific objectives about ways to improve as a coach during the season. Throughout the season you then attempt to achieve these objectives by setting shorter term goals in practices and competitions and then use various strategies and approaches to achieve your goals.

D. Video Analysis

You can benefit from videotaping your performances both at practice and competitions and then reviewing the tapes with peers or mentor coaches. The process promotes reflection on elements that are sometimes more subtle and not known to you such as body language and tone of voice.

Reflective Practice

Reflection on Action

Use the six-step model for reflection given below to explore each of the scenarios:

- A. Describe one of the most successful experiences that you have had as a coach in the last 2 years where you were able to bring the best out of the athlete(s).**

1. **Description** - what happened during this experience?

2. **Thoughts, Feelings, and Actions** - what were you thinking, feeling, and doing before it happened (during preparation) and as it was happening?

3. **Evaluation** - what went well and did not go so well for you as a coach in this situation?

4. **Analysis** - what sense can you make of this experience?

5. **Conclusion** - what else could you have done in this situation?

6. **Action Plan** - if a similar situation arose again, what would you do?

Reflective Practice

B. Describe one of the least successful experiences that you have had as a coach in the last 2 years where you weren't able to bring the best out of the athlete(s)?

1. **Description** - what happened during this experience?

2. **Thoughts, Feelings, and Actions** - what were you thinking, feeling, and doing before it happened (during preparation) and as it was happening?

3. **Evaluation** - what went well and did not go so well for you as a coach in this situation?

4. **Analysis** - what sense can you make of this experience?

5. **Conclusion** - what else could you have done in this situation?

6. **Action Plan** - if a similar situation arose again, what would you do?

Reflective Practice

Lessons Learned

Now that you had a chance to reflect on some of your successful and less successful coaching experiences, draw out positive lessons from this comparison.

- C. List 3 to 5 keys (for example, actions and attitudes) you feel you must do or exhibit to be at your best as a coach, to provide athletes with optimal support, and why you think they are important. List them in the boxes below:**

1	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
3	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
4	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
5	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Coach Weekly Reflection

<p>What were my objectives this week and what happened? To what extent did I achieve my objectives?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>1. How well did I follow my coach focus plan? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>What went well and what did not go so well? What were my biggest challenges?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>2. How well did I eat this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>3. How was my time management? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>4. How successful were my rest and recovery activities this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>5. How well did I sleep this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>What did I learn? What could I do differently?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>6. How much fun did I have this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>7. How confident was I regarding the achievement of my goals? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>Adjustments and objectives for next week:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	

Coach Weekly Reflection

<p>What were my objectives this week and what happened? To what extent did I achieve my objectives?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>1. How well did I follow my coach focus plan? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>What went well and what did not go so well? What were my biggest challenges?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>2. How well did I eat this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>3. How was my time management? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>What did I learn? What could I do differently?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>4. How successful were my rest and recovery activities this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>5. How well did I sleep this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>Adjustments and objectives for next week:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>6. How much fun did I have this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>7. How confident was I regarding the achievement of my goals? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>

Coach Weekly Reflection

<p>What were my objectives this week and what happened? To what extent did I achieve my objectives?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>1. How well did I follow my coach focus plan? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>What went well and what did not go so well? What were my biggest challenges?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>2. How well did I eat this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>3. How was my time management? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>What did I learn? What could I do differently?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>4. How successful were my rest and recovery activities this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>5. How well did I sleep this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>Adjustments and objectives for next week:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>6. How much fun did I have this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>7. How confident was I regarding the achievement of my goals? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>

Coach Weekly Reflection

<p>What were my objectives this week and what happened? To what extent did I achieve my objectives?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>1. How well did I follow my coach focus plan? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>What went well and what did not go so well? What were my biggest challenges?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>2. How well did I eat this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>3. How was my time management? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>What did I learn? What could I do differently?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>4. How successful were my rest and recovery activities this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>5. How well did I sleep this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>
<p>Adjustments and objectives for next week:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>6. How much fun did I have this week? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p> <p>7. How confident was I regarding the achievement of my goals? Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent</p>

What is your Coaching Personality?

Sean McCann (2003), a sport psychologist at US Olympic Training Center provided an interesting framework from which to examine coaching types. He outlined 4 different coaching “personalities” based on the most commonly used personality assessment tools used in team and business settings. Further, he suggested that each type of personality has various strengths, but that under pressure these strengths may become weaknesses if the emotion is not managed effectively. The coaching personalities are listed below:

Personality Type	Strengths	Tendencies Under Pressure
Stabilizer coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sees and uses facts of the situation. <input type="checkbox"/> Needs evidence to change. <input type="checkbox"/> Prefers standard practices. <input type="checkbox"/> Keeps everyone on course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> May become rigid and inflexible under pressure. <input type="checkbox"/> Not willing to make changes even though everyone else believes changes are necessary.
Trouble shooter coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attends to details and technique. <input type="checkbox"/> Open to new ideas and adopts new practices willingly. <input type="checkbox"/> Very good at fixing things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> May keep on adjusting or changing things when under pressure. <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to fix things even though they are working okay.
Visionary coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sees big picture very well. <input type="checkbox"/> Very creative and enjoys finding new ways to do things. <input type="checkbox"/> Admires breakthroughs in coaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> May be unable to accomplish vision <input type="checkbox"/> May miss paying attention to critical details. <input type="checkbox"/> Under pressure, may look like a dreamer, not aware of details, which affects athlete confidence.
Catalyst coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Passionate and energetic. <input type="checkbox"/> Gets athletes excited about vision. <input type="checkbox"/> Great motivator to group or individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> May become overly emotional under pressure, when calm is called for. <input type="checkbox"/> May get caught up in others issues and lose sight of task at hand.

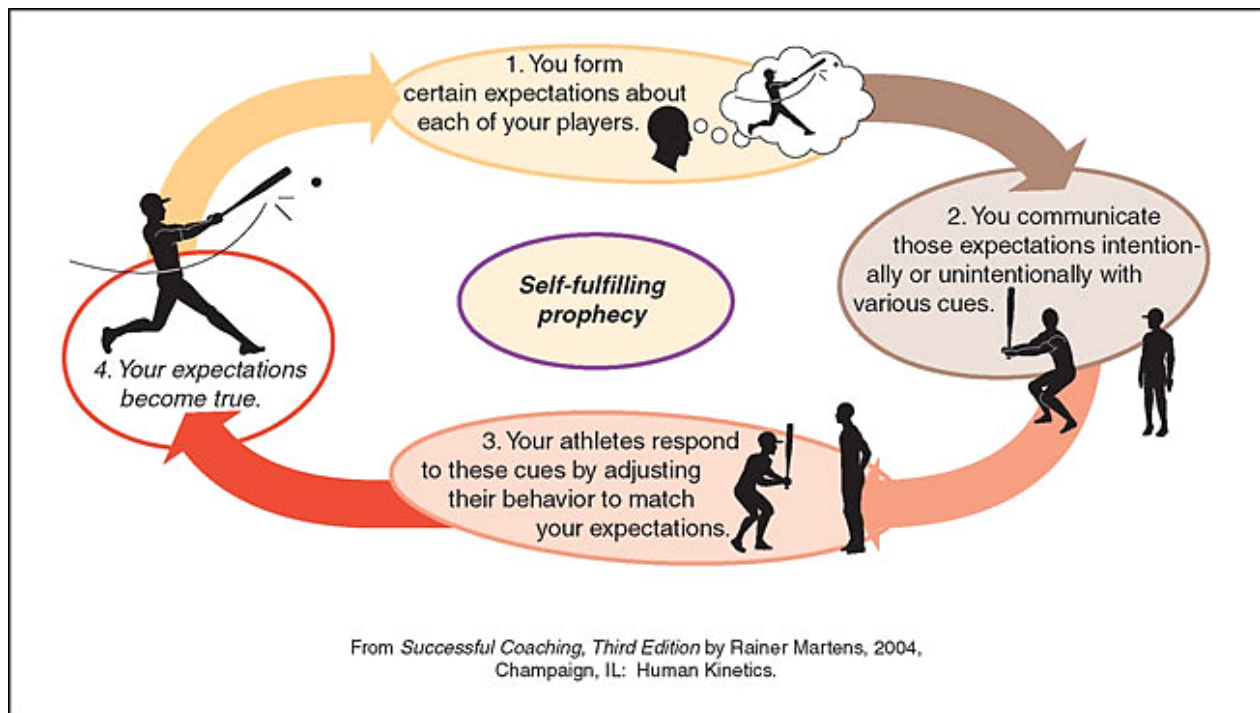
Any of these sound like you? Well you might feel no one type best describes you but rather you are more a combination of a few of them. If you feel you do fall strongly into one of these areas, it is good to be aware that it can have a significant impact on your performance. Being able to recognize your tendencies along with your signs of too much emotion are vital in order to implement strategies for modifying your emotion and staying at your best.

Coaching Philosophy

Reflection on your actions also provides insight into your coaching philosophy. What you actually do in your coaching practice is shaped by your values, beliefs, and assumptions as highlighted above. If you have not clearly defined your coaching philosophy then the influence your values and assumptions exert on your practice is largely unknown and unconscious.

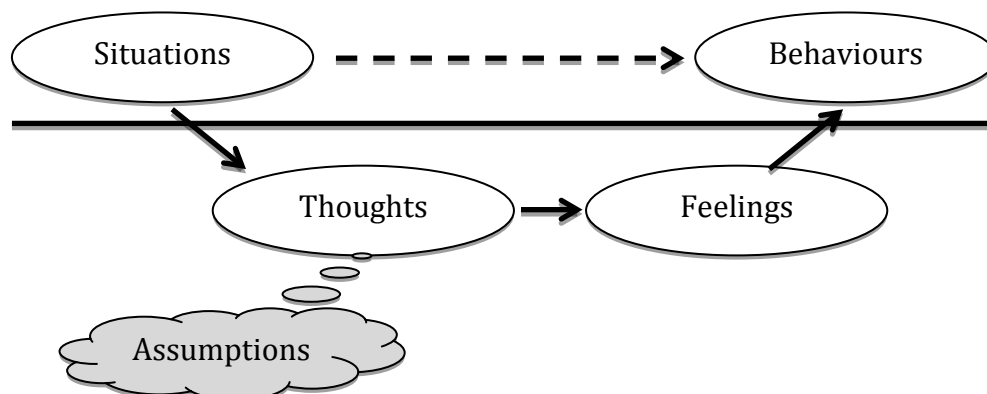
Self-fulfilling prophecy

An undefined coaching philosophy also makes you prone to self-fulfilling prophecy where your underlying expectations end up influencing athlete outcomes.



Awareness of values, beliefs, and assumptions

Developing and expressing a coaching philosophy helps you become more aware of and able to recognize how your values, beliefs, and assumptions influence your coaching behaviours.



Coaching Philosophy

Coaching emphasis

The most important decision you will make as a coach is the emphasis you will put on:

- Winning
- Enjoyment
- Development – Physically, Skills, Psychologically, Socially/Emotionally

Developing your coaching philosophy

Consider these questions to help you lay the foundation of your coaching philosophy:

- *What* is good coaching?
- *How* do the athletes I work with learn best?
- *Why* is my coaching approach significant?
- *Who* am I as a coach?
- How do I want to be remembered as a coach?

My Coaching Philosophy

*Consider sharing your coaching philosophy with your fellow coaches, athletes, and parents.

MENTAL SKILLS

How can I improve my effectiveness as a coach with athletes?

Communication and Behaviours

Supporting Athlete Motivation

Coach Communication and Behaviours

“What athletes remember about their coach’s behaviors and how they interpret these actions, affect the way athletes evaluate their sport experiences.”

Frank Smoll & Ronald Smith

Your actions and behaviours are mediated by an athlete’s recall and the meaning he or she gives to your actions. The meaning assigned is influenced by the athlete’s age, expectations, self-esteem, and anxiety levels, just to name a few. Therefore, the same feedback given to two athletes could be interpreted differently. For example, you might say to one athlete, “You’ve got this” and she thinks, “Yes I have this. Coach believes in me.” You might say the exact same statement to another athlete and he thinks, “uh oh, what happens, if I screw up. Coach will be so disappointed.”

Mastery Approach to Coaching (MAC)

One way to address the issue of diversity of athlete interpretation is to be consistent and effective with your communication. Ron Smith and Frank Smoll, two sport psychologists at the University of Washington, developed a research supported program called the Mastery Approach to Coaching (MAC). In the program, coaches are trained to increase 4 specific behaviours:

1. Positive reinforcement

- Give immediately if possible. Reinforce effort and process as much as possible.

2. Mistake contingent encouragement

- Give encouragement immediately after a mistake.
- If the athlete is unclear how to correct the behavior then you can link your reinforcement with corrective instruction.

3. Corrective instruction given in a positive and encouraging fashion

4. Sound technical instruction

- Be clear, concise, and positive. Demonstrate when possible as well.

Coaches are also guided to avoid non-reinforcement of positive behaviours, punishment for mistakes, and punitive technical instruction. The final piece of the program teaches coaches how to establish team rules and to provide reinforcement for those who follow the rules and for those who demonstrate socially supportive behaviours within the team.

Results of this program have indicated that the athletes of MAC coaches had higher levels of self-esteem, decreased anxiety, enjoyed their sport experience more, and evaluated their teammates and coaches more positively in comparison to coaches who were not trained in the program.

One way to develop your awareness around your behaviours is to monitor and evaluate your effectiveness. Here is a self-report tool that you can use to assess yourself based on the MAC criteria.

Coach Communication and Behaviours

Mastery Approach to Coaching Self Report Form

Complete this form as soon as possible after a practice, game, or competition. Think about what you did, but also about the kinds of situations in which the actions occurred and the kinds of athletes who were involved.

1. When athletes made good plays, approximately what percentage of the time did you respond with reinforcement? _____%
2. When athletes gave good effort (regardless of outcome), what percentage of the time did you respond with reinforcement? _____%
3. About how many times did you reinforce athletes for displaying good sportsmanship, supporting teammates, and complying with team rules? _____%
4. When athletes made mistakes, approximately what percentage of the time did you respond with:
 - a. Encouragement only _____%
 - b. Corrective instruction given in an encouraging manner _____%Note: Sum of a and b should not exceed 100%
5. When mistakes were made, did you stress the importance of learning from them?
___yes/ ___no
6. Did you emphasize the importance of having fun while practicing or competing?
___yes/ ___no
7. Did you tell your athletes that doing their best is all you expect of them?
___yes/ ___no
8. Did you communicate that winning is important, but working to improve skills is even more important?
___yes/ ___no
9. Did you do or say anything to help your athletes apply what they learned today to other parts of their life (for example, doing the right things in school, family or social life)?
___yes/ ___no
10. Something to think about: is there anything you might do differently if you had a chance to coach this practice or game again? _____

*This form was excerpted from the manual that is given to MAC workshop participants.
(Smoll & Smith, 2008)*

You could also consider videotaping yourself at practice to help in your self-assessment. You could also ask someone else to rate you as well (e.g., assistant coach, parent).

Supporting Athlete Motivation

Key questions to ask yourself

- How much choice do you give athletes?
- How often do you let athletes know why they are doing something or why rules and limits have been set?
- How often do you inquire about or acknowledge athletes' feelings about a task?
- How often are you open to different ways of doing things rather than just your way?
- How often do you use positive feedback in a controlling way?
- How often do you use guilt-inducing statements, rewards or comparison/outcome to motivate athletes?

Autonomy

Autonomy is the experience of being the initiator and the director of one's own actions and behavior. Autonomy is proposed to be one of the basic psychological needs that, if met, contributes to athlete motivation, persistence, and enjoyment of the sport experience overall.

Autonomy support is defined as the interpersonal behavior coaches engage in during training and competition to identify, encourage, and enhance athletes' inner motivational drive. It involves being able to: (a) take other's perspective, (b) acknowledge other's feelings, and (c) provide others with pertinent information and opportunity for choice, while minimizing the use of pressures and demands.

Being Controlling

The opposite of autonomy support is referred to as "Being Controlling". Controlling is the interpersonal behavior coaches engage in during training and competitions when they try to gain athletes' compliance with their way of thinking, feeling, or behaving. This action takes away from the athlete's overall sense of autonomy and, as a result, decreases their motivation, persistence, and enjoyment of the sport experience overall.

Supporting Athlete Motivation

Determining your level of autonomy support

Below are six statements that will help you determine your level of autonomy support. You can use the tool as a self-assessment tool or have someone else use it to evaluate you. You can also video yourself to help you with the assessment.

Assessing your Autonomy Supportiveness (AS) and Controllingness (C)

1. I provide athletes with choices and options during training and competition.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

2. I try to make sure my athletes feel understood by me.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3. I convey to my athletes, my confidence in their ability to do well at training and competition.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4. I encourage athletes to ask questions.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

5. I listen to how athletes would like to do things.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

6. I try to understand how athletes see things before suggesting a new way to do things.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Average your score:

6 to 7 = Highly AS

4 to 5 = Moderately AS

2 to 3 = Moderately C

1 to 2 = Highly C

Taken from <http://www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT/measures/passport.php>

MENTAL SKILLS

What more can I do as a coach?

Coach focus plans

Manage distractions

Coach recovery

Managing Your Performance: Coach Focus Plans

Competition at major games can be very emotional. Expectations are higher, the meaning of competitions is greater, and the investment and dedication to pursuing excellence is significant. Maintaining optimal performance under these circumstances is a challenging task and something that can be an ongoing battle. High performance coaches often learn (from their experiences) the need for strategies to manage their performance effectively so they can be at their best.

Here are some examples of routines that coaches follow:

- **Game day routines**
 - Individualized routines to help their readiness on game day such as going for a walk or run and finding a quiet space to focus and think.
- **Mental rehearsal**
 - Mental rehearsal of common and critical situations they might face and then visualize how they want to respond.
- **Personal plans**
 - Predetermined personal plans for the pre-game meeting, team warm up and for critical points in the games or competition (e.g., timeouts).
- **Post competition strategies**
 - Post competition strategies for managing their emotion such as going for a walk or venting with an assistant coach in private to release any frustrations.

Developing personal routines

As a coach, you need to be self-aware, know your triggers, and have strategies for controlling and managing emotion as part of your tool kit. Developing personalized routines for training and competition can serve to keep your performance optimal.

Managing Your Performance: Coach Focus Plans

Training Checklist

How do you prepare yourself, or what do you do before arriving at training that ensures the session will be effective? Write out a checklist of what you should do before, during, and after training sessions to be as effective as possible.

Before	During	After
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Competition Checklist

Write out a checklist of what you should do before, during, and after an important competition to be as efficient as possible. *Your previous reflections through this diary should provide you with key points to consider. Consider aspects related to planning, controlling your emotions, managing stress, dealing with distractions and having a personal recovery regeneration plan.*

Before	During	After
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Learning to Manage Distractions

Many factors can represent a source of distraction for yourself and affect your overall performance as a coach, both in training and in competition. The first step in learning to manage distractions is to become mindful of the distractions that challenge you.

Make a list of all the possible distraction factors that you face as a coach (not your athletes) in training and in competition.

Training	Competition

Indicate above with either a C or a UC whether the distraction is controllable or uncontrollable. It is important to know when you simply have to cope and make the best of a situation in comparison to when you can actively do something to either prevent or deal with the situation before it arises.

Learning to Manage Distractions

Managing Distractions in Training and Competition

Think of different strategies you could develop and implement as a coach to deal with these factors and to limit their impact on you, both before and during training and competition. Indicate what you would do, as well as how and when you would manage the situation.

<i>Before a TRAINING session</i>			
Distractor	What	How	When

<i>During a TRAINING session</i>			
Distractor	What	How	When

Learning to Manage Distractions

<i>Before an important COMPETITION</i>			
Distractor	What	How	When

<i>During a major COMPETITION</i>			
Distractor	What	How	When

Coach Recovery Can Be R.E.A.C.H.E.D.

Although the topic of coach recovery has not received a lot of attention, the importance of it cannot be overemphasized. You are a critical element in the system and your ability to function at your best depends on achieving your ideal state of readiness. As a coach you are a performer just like the athletes you work with and although some elements may be different, you are exposed to numerous demands that tax your system and affect your ability to perform.

Recovering effectively from heavy workloads will influence your performance, your role in athlete success, and team success. Achieving your ideal state is significantly influenced by your ability to recover and ultimately will affect everything you do from communication to planning and preparation

How can you tell what is optimal recovery for you?

There is no single level of recovery that is optimal for all coaches. Every individual has unique demands and unique requirements. As such, what is a breath of fresh air to one coach may be boredom or distress to another. And even when there may be agreement that a particular event is distressing, every individual is likely to differ in their physiological and psychological responses to it. To get a better sense of the effectiveness of your recovery on a day to day basis, consider rating the elements below on a five point scale:

Recovery effectiveness

1. How well did I eat today?	1	2	3	4	5
2. How was my time management?	1	2	3	4	5
3. How much effort was required for me to perform today?	1	2	3	4	5
4. How recovered did I feel prior to the performance today?	1	2	3	4	5
5. How successful was my rest and recovery activities yesterday?	1	2	3	4	5
6. How well did I recover physically and mentally yesterday?	1	2	3	4	5
7. How satisfied and relaxed was I before sleep last night?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How much fun did I have today?	1	2	3	4	5
9. How confident was I regarding the achievement of your goals?	1	2	3	4	5
10. How busy was my day today?	1	2	3	4	5
11. How busy do I expect my day to be tomorrow?	1	2	3	4	5

Coach Recovery Can Be R.E.A.C.H.E.D.

How can you manage recovery?

Enhancing your recovery requires finding balance in an imbalanced world. Many strategies may seem obvious but when under pressure it is important that the strategies remain a consistent part of your daily regime. Effective recovery entails consistently integrating strategies into your day to day process to create good habits that will endure under all circumstances. By following the seven steps below you can map out your plan for an enhanced recovery plan.

Reserves

Recovery is enhanced through building your physical reserves. Exercise cardiovascular fitness three to four times a week (moderate, prolonged rhythmic exercise is best, such as walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging). Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals. Avoid nicotine, excessive caffeine, and other stimulants. Mix leisure with work. Take breaks and get away when you can. Small breaks are effective too. Get enough sleep. Be as consistent with your sleep schedule as possible.

Emotions

Recovery is improved if the intensity of emotional reactions is reduced. The reaction to triggers (events that cue your attention) occurs through your perception of danger, physical danger and/or emotional danger. Do you know what your triggers are? Are you viewing triggers in exaggerated terms and/or taking a difficult situation and making it a disaster? Are you expecting to please everyone? Are you reacting and viewing things as absolutely critical and urgent? Work at adopting more moderate views; try to see the triggers as something you can manage rather than something that overpowers you.

Awareness

Recovery is enhanced if you know your reactions to triggers. To enhance your awareness seek feedback from staff and support people regarding your behaviours. Engage in daily reflections and journaling as additional means that increase your awareness. Know your coaching personality and its weaknesses when you are under pressure. For example, if you are the type of coach who is creative and energetic and a good motivator to athletes, then under pressure your tendency may be to become overly emotional when cool and calm is actually called for. Do you know your coaching personality and its tendency?

Controllables

Recovery is facilitated if you recognize what you can change – identify what are controllables and separate them from the uncontrollables. Can you change your triggers by avoiding or eliminating them completely? Can you reduce their intensity (manage them over a period of time instead of on a daily or weekly basis)? Can you shorten your exposure to triggers (take a break, leave the physical event site)? Devote time in the day for energy management strategies.

Coach Recovery Can Be R.E.A.C.H.E.D.

Hold

Recovery is done through maintaining emotional reserves. Develop some mutually supportive friendships/relationships. Pursue meaningful and realistic goals that are your goals, rather than goals others have for you that you do not share. Expect some frustrations, failures and sorrows. Always be kind and gentle with yourself – take care of yourself.

Execute

Recovery can be achieved by outlining enhanced recovery plans. Take a look at your timetable and place blocks of ‘recovery time.’ Engage in mindful energy management strategies. Before you start your day, imagine how you want to be that day and see yourself the way you want to be. Develop useful relaxation and communication strategies when engaging athletes with difficult feedback. Know when you can take five minutes of mindful down time (e.g., meditation). After you have written down your plans execute them.

Debrief

Recovery means planning regular debriefs with a sport psychology consultant or someone that you trust. Regular debriefing can also be valuable for your entire staff. Daily debriefs are one of the most important elements that you can develop in your enhanced recovery package. You ask athletes to learn from their experiences, let go and make adjustments to their performance– why not give yourself the luxury of such a process!?

Coach Recovery Can Be R.E.A.C.H.E.D.

Making a Recovery Plan

Identifying challenges and having a clear plan are important steps in allowing yourself to perform at your best. You deserve to be at your best when it matters the most.

Here are some questions to consider so you can be at your best:

1. How would you describe your coaching personality? What are its strengths? What are some of its potential weaknesses?

2. What things help you perform at your best?

3. What are your biggest triggers (things that throw you off or irritate you)?

4. What will be your biggest challenges/distractions at the competitions and how do you plan to cope with them?

5. What is your recovery plan for competitions? What are things you need to make sure happen so you can perform at your best (consider exercise, support, and any other ideas from the information above)?

MENTAL SKILLS

Coaching at games

Mental preparation tips for games

Self-evaluation of coach effectiveness

Learning at the games

Mental Preparation Tips for Games

Here is an overview and checklist for managing optimal performance at games. Consider what you already do and where you could improve.

A. MENTAL PREPARATION LEADING UP TO GAMES, UPON ARRIVAL, AND DURING DIVISIONING

1. Identify, strengthen, and enable the mental strategies athletes already use:

- What are athletes preferred focus strategies?
- What things give them confidence?
- What things help them manage emotions?
- What type of communication do they want/prefer from coaches?

2. Set clear goals

- Identify what athletes want from the experience.
- Identify process goals for competition (personal bests, etc.)
 - Develop a list of reasons why the individual/team can achieve their goals.
 - Identify what specifically has to be focused on to achieve those goals.

3. Continue with team building

- Create things that make them unique as a team.
 - Team cheer or song
 - Team T-shirts
 - Banners or posters team can work on and display at venues
 - Team oath or expectations
- Identify communication protocols
 - e.g. if there is an issue, what steps should the athlete take?

4. Anticipate and minimize distractions

- Anticipate and discuss with athletes possible challenges and distractions
- Strategize and plan how the team will deal with the challenges best
 - Identify the most challenging possibility
 - Identify the best way of preparing for it
 - Describe how the condition might serve as an advantage
- Develop a team concept for dealing with distractions
- Share examples and stories from other Games and ways athletes coped well
- Be aware of specific challenges related to multi-sport games. For example:

○ Different foods and grazing style cafeterias	○ Transportation – lining up, riding the bus, waiting around	○ Security – frequent accreditation checking, must have accreditation with you at all times
○ Duration and intensity	○ Media	
○ Expectations	○ Minimal personal time/space	
○ Facilities	○ Opening Ceremonies	
○ Family and friends	○ Pin trading	

Mental Preparation Tips for Games

B. MENTAL PREPARATION DURING THE GAMES

1. Outline daily schedule

- Identify and outline schedule for each day of the event and post up for athletes
 - Helps individuals know what is expected
 - Provides opportunity for individuals to make own plan around schedule

2. Follow routines and plans athletes usually use and establish team routines quickly

- Identify clear and consistent pre-competition routines for individual/team
- Identify clear and consistent competition focus plans for individual/team
- Identify refocusing plans for individuals/team – what helps them get back on track?
- Identify post competition debriefing plans for individuals/team

3. Develop a recovery/regeneration plan and follow through.

Include opportunities to:

- **Release** - manage emotions from competition
- **Recharge** - nutrition/hydration
- **Refresh** - stress management techniques
- **Rehearse/rebuild** - implementing lessons learned
- **Re-enter** - focus plans

Be sure to consider and incorporate the following elements:

- Cool down
- Post-game debrief
- Eating
- Hydration
- Sleep/Rest/Relaxation
- Exercise
- Fun
- Personal time
- Emotion check ins
- Confidence check ins
- Focus check ins

4. Be prepared and expect the unexpected.

Things often happen at Major Games that are not expected. When these events do occur be sure to:

- Address and acknowledge athletes' thoughts/feelings
- Revisit the vision or goals of the team/individual if necessary
- Revisit the goals, roles and responsibilities of teammates if necessary
- Focus on strengths and controllables of the situation
- Identify how you can use the emotion/situation to your advantage

Mental Preparation Tips for Games

5. Trust

- Remind athletes of all their training and to trust themselves to free their mind
- Find balance between performance, enjoyment and learning.

6. Preparing yourself as a coach

- Reflect on your experiences
- Know your triggers
- Have clear goals
- Be true to your routines
- Have a clear recovery/regeneration plan
- Focus on the controllables
- Learn from others
- Record/monitor and evaluate

Once at the Games, it is about maximizing focus and confidence and maintaining energy so everyone can all perform at their best and enjoy the experience to its fullest.

Self -Evaluation – Coach Effectiveness

1. I set clear expectations and objectives for myself for the Games.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

2. I made sure to keep things simple and focused at the Games.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

3. I evaluated my effectiveness daily and made adjustments to my performance.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

4. My expectations for my athletes' performance were realistic.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

5. My athletes followed my overall performance plan for the Games.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

6. I was able to deal with crisis situations and made decisive but fair decisions.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

7. I was able to focus on the controllables of the situation and let the uncontrollable go.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

8. I was able to manage the distractions well at the Games.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

9. I was able to manage the day to day stressors well.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

10. I followed my recovery plan during the games well.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

11. I used my support systems (e.g. other coaches, mission staff and sport psych) effectively.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

12. I was consistent with my coach philosophy and focus plan.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

Learning at Games

My biggest successes at the Games were:

My biggest challenges of the Games were:

My biggest surprise from the Games:

My highlight from the Games:

My learning from the Games:
