

# How to apply mental coaching?

with Jaap van Helvoort

From the series :  
Best Practice Sharing of  
Innovative and Disruptive  
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- During the last few years sport coaches and players realize how important is mental side of coaching.
- Coaches can assist their athletes to apply highly effective, basic mental skills

# What is a mental coach?

A mental coach helps to improve an athlete's mental readiness, focus, ability to relax, energy and emotional control, mental control of thoughts and images, and all other mental factors involved in training and performance.



- **Jaap van Helvoort** ( he is a mental coach working for HC Den Bosch) and he introduced us to the model „Preparation / Execution / Improvement”
- He told how important is mental preparation and talked us about self regulation.



# Three phases

1. Preparation

2. Execution

3. Improvement



# How to start with self regulation ?



A common pitfall of many trainers is the need to tell players what they must do. Though meant well the effect is that players are not able to think for themselves when on the pitch and when decisions have to be made in milliseconds.

So, as a trainer/coach, start with being aware about the way you train/coach your players. Spend every training a few minutes to reflect on the balance between “telling” and “asking” and tell yourself at times to “shut up”

# 1. Preparation

Before exercise coaches should ask players

- What are you good at and why?
- What do you want to improve?
- The best way about improving a skills is to set goals and monitor these goals. People can set different types of goals.



# PREPARE

What we've learned over the years is that those athletes that win the mental battle from the outset are far more capable of achieving virtually anything.

Mental Discipline is what turns good athletes into great competitors. It separates the truly great from the good.



## 2. Execution

This time during exercise coaches ask players:

- How is it going?
- How will you work even better on your goal?

Monitor your own performance.

Self-evaluation is a key element of success.



# Focus on execution

What you focus on prior to competition is critical to your mental game success.

We have to teach athletes where to direct their focus and how to improve their refocusing skills when competing.

This helps them maintain focus on executing the present task successfully, rather than dwelling on mistakes or worrying about the outcome.



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# 3. Improvement

After exercise coaches should ask players:

- Did you reach your goal?
- What did you learn for the next time?

Video :

What is self regulation about ?

# How can coaches improve team performance?

A coach can give teams the right tools and mechanisms to communicate effectively so that they can streamline team projects and improve performance on an ongoing basis.

When individuals feel accountability for their own mistakes and successes, they are more engaged with their work and more likely to achieve their goals.



# A few common questions ?

**I do not have time to talk with every player every time so how can I do this ?**

- Especially in bigger groups it will be challenging to communicate and ask these questions everytime. So make it a habit to ask players when they are getting into line for the exercise or take them out of the exercise for 10 seconds while the other continue. Do not feel that you must ask every player every time but simply break the habit of telling the players every time what they do well and what not. Let them reflect on their own performance

# A few common questions ?

## From which age can I use this technique ?

- The technique can be used from any age. Be creative in finding ways how to get your players think. It's not so much about age but more about practise



# A few common questions ?

## What if the player is not able to react to my coaching questions ?

- Every player is able to self regulate but it might be more difficult for somebody who is not used to this so start simple and have patience. Give them time to think and learn to keep you mouth shut. You will be positively surprised what kids are capable off ! Have patience !

# *Preparation*

# *Execution*

# *Improvement*

This skills we can use to make training more efficient.

## **Phase 1: Preparation**

- What are you good at and why?
- What do you want to improve?

## **Phase 2: Execution**

- How is it going?
- How will you work even better on your goal?

## **Phase 3: Improvement**

- Did you reach your goal?
- What did you learn for the next time?



- The above represents a very brief overview of some of the techniques used by players to improve their mental skills.
- For any mental skills training to be effective, it must be accepted by the players and the coaches as a useful tool



# Reference materials

- Session with Jaap van Helvoort – Erasmus Programme
- <https://www.athletesmentaltrainer.com/>
- <https://www.coachmorgansullivan.com/mental-preparation>



# Thanks

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