

What Is Mental Toughness?

QUESTION:

Hi Lachlan, we all experience the fate of losing, yet few of us know how to fight through the contest. Do you have any idea on what is mental toughness?

And, can we train for it?

Mark

RESPONSE:

Hello Mark:

Every week we hear coaches, players and commentators on TV and in the newspapers say their code of professional sport is mostly played above the shoulders.

No different our sport, bowls.

Simply stated for me, mental toughness is being able to be in control (of yourself).

Great competitors know how to respond emotionally to problems and crises that can arise. They become challenged, inspired and more determined to succeed.

Mental toughness controls the ideal performance state, so how well you perform depends on how successful you are at maintaining the right mental attitude within yourself. The goal is not to triumph over your opponent, but to obtain control over yourself.

Everyone makes mistakes somewhere, sometime. They are a part of life. They occur too often in sport.

Mistakes are not the issue, but your inability to do anything about them remains the issue.

Mistakes infer a high degree of pressure.

One of the lessons learnt in my time in elite bowls (as coach) is the need to take pressure off the player. Players rarely perform better when they feel under pressure. They perform well by their ability to take the pressure off themselves and concentrate on the moment or the present.

Succeeding in bowls, becoming the best you can be, often carries with it a price. Time, money, dedication, commitment, personal sacrifice and frustration, all combine to challenge your goals, your motivation and there will be disappointments and doubts on your ability.

That is the test of mental toughness.

What was that song years back...when the going gets tough, the tough get going.

Website menu- ...Q & A
TOPIC: What is mental toughness?

Now in response to the second part of your question:

Winning is important and personal.

An obsession with winning can be self-defeating. Your contest should be directed solely toward performing to the very best of your ability at the time. And you have a measure of that level of performance. Doing your very best at any moment needs to be your focus and goal. Winning comes as a consequence of that approach.

To perform at your best, guess what?

You have to work hard to attain and develop those skills applicable to bowls, it is important to repeat and reinforce those skills with regular coach driven intense training.

Repetition is fundamental to all a high level of skills, realize that and put it into practice, and you will not be surprised at how much you achieve in bowls.

Repetition however, requires a level of persistence, a level of mental toughness to work hard when it seems more like hard work.

Lachlan Tighe, 2018