

MENTAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN TRAINING

Simulation of actual game situations

It has been demonstrated in sport generally that simulation training can help an athlete prepare to more effectively meet the challenges they expect to face in competition.

Simulation helps the bowler:

- Prepare physically through quality intensity training reflecting the actual event (How recently was I asked why do bowlers who burn on the track go to water on the green?)
- Prepare mentally for competition and the physical / emotional condition prevailing in competition.
- To be able to stay focused despite the demands of competition.

Note however we are not advocating an intensity of training daily – periodization of training is so important; it is a balance of having quality / intense training to replicate elite competition, rest is also essential.

In fact, a sense of enjoyment is necessary as the other ingredient in that mix.

The bowler needs to be rested to get the best from themselves in major competitions.

It is unfortunate that elite bowlers perform poorly in competition because of unforeseen circumstances that could easily be replicated. So adverse / unforeseen conditions can be better met and overcome if these were simulated in practice

Over the period from 2002, I have observed, or heard, Aussie squad members bemoan the greens they were due to play or train on in the northern hemisphere and perform accordingly. Notwithstanding, these squad members are very good bowlers. Technically.

Simulating the physical conditions has to enhance practising the mental and tactical conditions.

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I have heard of times where the training session lasted less than an hour any particular day as players were frustrated by the sub standard playing surfaces, the dismal weather conditions.

That was the whole point of the exercise, hello!!!

Where I have been national coach in these situations others (selectors) would look to the heavens in search of guidance as they, and I, seemed to be at odds where I was the only one aware of the need to persist. Thankfully, I intruded and ensured the players got the gist of the purpose of having the frustrating conditions and them learning how best to deal with it. Sometimes.

All the more reason for their training to include mental and tactical skill components of training as the simulation has to include the anticipated emotional and mental state you find yourself in when supposedly adverse conditions prevail.

Performing under simulated adverse conditions reinforces that you can do well in all circumstances. Merely by foreseeing planning and applying it to the probable problems, you enter them with a heightened degree of confidence, due to familiarity you know what you are now capable of doing.

Conversely, introduce the expected too, such as warm ups, rent a crowd, noise, and do it rain , hail or shine and at differing times of the day – nowadays preparing a team for competition by scheduling event training at night so simulating modern competition schedules.

In some cases it is important to stretch the simulation e.g. a game is played for an hour so simulate the training session for 75 minutes so as to extend the quality / intensity period. In bowls we have to investigate the event programs so as to best simulate that game.

Before I forget to mention, the value of games simulation is the chance to set up mental simulation (coping skill) training too.

The mental simulation allows the coach, and you, the player, to prepare for and practice various responses to discover the ones that work, are effective, in your mind before you actually confront the event factor.

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Following positive examples of others is a variation on simulation, i.e. replicate the role model approach and attributes.

Look at and selectively draw on other mentor / role models to better yourself, physically mentally and tactically.

And that doesn't stop you from viewing the 'worse nightmare' type – definitely ensure you learn from them and not emulate a person whose behaviour is unacceptable and not likely in achieving success.

If you want to soar like an eagle, then don't mix with the turkeys.

So in sighting an example of a bad technique or poor behavior, etc., say to yourself , I am definitely not going to be like that, perform like that, or act like that.

In summary, coach, player, team, simulate, emulate, but don't leave it too late.

Lachlan Tighe, 2018