

## **Mental Skill Development In Training**

Mental skill can be developed, trained and reinforced.

Since late 1990s I have touched base with a handful of sports psychologists and skill acquisition experts to learn the principles of mental skill and see how I might apply those skills in my bowls coaching and training sessions.

And what I did, in fact, 50 days out from the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games was have a quote a day on the entrance door of our meeting room which we used daily. And I saw this as a tool to commence the training sessions.

And each day one player and a coach had to give their interpretation of the theme (truism) as it applied to them. No one was allowed not to express a view.

The purpose was to have the players and coaches constantly dream of success, to have reinforcement of their goals with messages from other successful sporting identities.

It was meant to reinforce the pursuit of their own goal. And having fellow squad members express a view gave a sense of first hand reinforcement and a sense of belonging to a team committed.

It has to be remembered that ranting on about great player or team qualities, commitment, etc., has to take account of the group of individuals and that human beings make mistakes, make promises they cannot deliver, hope rather than work for success, etc.

All I ever do is foster a culture and an environment that permits the player to aspire to achieve their own 'pb' level, despite all the external influences that require them to acquire the (few) medals on offer at Games.

Gee we look at cricket in Australia 2018 and the national body and its team appear not to have been on the same cultural journey I was on with the Malaysians and others since then.

No doubt the Malaysian medallists were in the top bracket of people with highly tuned mental skills.

But in a team game there will be (some) others with an equally high level of mental skill and strength though these people are 'burdened' with lower mortals. That's the beauty of team sport – motoring along at the pace of the slowest member of the team, or getting the least able to strive to be closer to the best members of the team.

## ***Menu- mental skill***

Whenever I saw players not doing any of this mental skill work at training, I would bring the video to them to reinforce the visual and the intended message of mental skill and toughness.

In 2002 post Games I was brought into the role at BA of the first High Performance manager. I had hoped in my role as Australia's High Performance manager to shift the skill training toward this vital area of mental skill, however others in the sport are still shuffling toward that mindset even now in 2018.

The current BA high performance management is fostering it nowadays all these years later after the previous HP management was like a totalitarian regime in the approach to such development, which did not work as well as having players and coaches embrace the benefits, as they do now in 2018.

**Lachlan Tighe, 2018**