



## Researched Based Baseball

Psychological Skills Questionnaire or Evaluation:

**Motivation:** Motivation is the factor that drives an athlete to participate in athletics or discontinue. This factor determines if the athlete will continue to participate even through adversity conditions. Weiss & Amorose (2008) describe the largest intrinsic motivator for an athlete is task-involved goals that are also associated with the environment or climate of the sport. Also describe is that players that use task goals over ego involved goals have healthier interpretations about their ability and less anxiety that hinders performance. Ego driven athletes have a tendency to be more self involved, comparing themselves to other athletes or goals that only incorporate winning as an outcome based goal. These ego driven athletes will possess more anxiety during performance and have a tougher time performing at a high level (Weiss & Amorose, 2008).

- How motivated are you for practice?
- How motivated are you for games?
- When participating in a game or practice what will influence your motivation more to work harder or keep playing? Are you more motivated by being successful in the individual skills that you accomplish or don't accomplish in the game or are you more motivated by the win or loss at the end of the game (task vs. ego)?
- What drives your motivation the most and which drives it the least? how others see your performance (social), rewards like scholarships (extrinsic), winning over losing (ego or outcome), state championship (extrinsic or outcome), internal satisfaction for being successful and a skill or a skill master (task)?

**Attention:** Attention is taking possession of the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of several stimuli that are trying to take the train of the thought. An athlete or individual with good attention has ability to switch focus from one source of information to another with minimal distraction and loss of focus. Additionally attention is the amount of information that can be attended to at any one time (Boutcher S. H., 2008).

- Do you feel that in a practice or competition you sense your attention going to another off task area like another player, environmental stimuli, or a coach?
- How fast can you gain your attention once it has been lost, 1 minute, 2 pitches, half the game?
- Do you feel overloaded with information on the mound?
- What strategies do you use for focus?

**Arousal management:** Balague (2005) describes arousal management as a general physiological and psychological state of an individual that ranks on a scale between sleeping, drowsy, relaxed, alert, and excited. Anxiety is something that affects the arousal level, and is not always bad, and included worry apprehension, and nervousness. Anxiety is either somatic (physical) or cognitive (mental) and is going to alter the arousal state. Good athletes might say that they use this nervous energy to get them in the right frame of mind to complete (Balague, 2005).

- On a scale of 1-10 what would you say is your arousal level pre-competition?
- What would you say on that same scale should be your arousal level for the best performance?
- Are you too amped up?
- Are you too mellow?
- On a scale of 1-10 how nervous or anxious are you pre competition?

- What would you say on that same scale should be the best amount of anxiety for the best performance?

**Self-confidence:** Self confidence is the belief that an individual has the internal resources, particular abilities, to achieve success. Self-efficacy is the belief in your capabilities to organize and execute a set of skill to achieve a goal (Chase & Vealey, 2008).

- How confident are you in practice or a game that you have the physical skills to execute a pitch location or type?
- How confident are you in a practice that you will execute that pitch location or type?
- How confident are you in a game that you will execute that pitch location or type?

**Mental toughness:**

- How well can you cope with a situation once it has gone wrong?
- When something on the mound doesn't go your way how do you react, might be after an error, big hit, bad call, etc?
- Does that affect future pitches?
- If so how long does that last?

Psychological Skill Tools:

**Commitment:** "Commitment is an essential component of top level performances. When athletes decide the level of commitment that they will make to their sport, they are better able to guide their future choices and accept the necessary sacrifices in their lives. Orlick (2000) indicates that excellence is possible when athletes demonstrate high levels of dedication, self-discipline, passion and love for what they do. Athletes who have made a commitment to their sport will constantly strive to improve and adjust their performance even in the face of less favorable performance outcomes. Athletes who have a sound understanding of their commitment level are more able to adjust their training, priorities and expectations

(Farres, A mental training tool: Assessment as a learning tool, 2000, p. 2).”

- Are you willing to sacrifice other things to excel at your sport?
- Are you determined to keep pushing yourself and never give up in trying to achieve your sport goals?
- Do you take personal responsibility for mistakes and work hard to correct them?
- Do you give 100% in practice (whether it is going well or not so well)?
- Do you put in extra time for mental and physical preparation before, after or between regular practice sessions?

**Goal setting:** “Goal setting can contribute to athletes' direction, focus and belief. By setting specific target areas to improve, athletes can acknowledge their past and current achievements and envision and chart out their future. Goals also contribute to athletes' ability to identify and focus on the appropriate areas determined to enhance their performance. Concomitantly, it allows them to see themselves progressing even in situations where their motivation may be challenged such as practice. By knowing what areas to focus on, athletes are also better at identifying and overcoming potential distracters in training. Finally, as athletes witness themselves achieving their goals, their confidence and belief develops. Ultimately, this allows them to set and achieve more difficult goals (Farres, A mental training tool: Assessment as a learning tool, 2000, p. 4).”

- Before practice or training do you set specific mental goals, for example, to stay positive, to focus only on what you want to do, or to put away distractions?
- During practice, before you execute a skill piece, drill, routine or play sequence, do you set a specific goal by deciding exactly what you want to do, and exactly how you want to do it?
- During practice when there is a break in the action, do you take the time to think about

what worked and what didn't work in trying to achieve you goals?

- After practice do you decide exactly what you want to do next time, based on thinking about what worked and what didn't work last time?

**Mental Imagery:** “Imagery is useful for guiding athletes' belief, focus and performance. Through imagery athletes can pre-experience and re-experience feelings, sensations, actions and/or skills that are part of their desired performance. Top level performers experience clear, positive, process oriented images as real feelings in their body and mind. These images serve to guide athletes' actions, reactions and experiences (Farres, A mental training tool: Assessment as a learning tool, 2000, p. 3).”

- During practice, before you do a skill, drill or play sequence, do you take a moment to run the skill through your mind?
- When the coach gives you feedback or suggestions do you try to clearly imagine or feel what you are being asked to do before attempting to do it?
- After doing a less than perfect skill or play sequence, do you imagine yourself doing it better, before actually trying it again?
- Take a moment now to imagine you doing a basic movement, skill, element or sequence, which you do regularly in your sport. After trying this, respond to the following questions:
  - How close was it to the way you actually do it?
  - Did you experience the physical sensations in your body that you actually feel when you do it?
  - Did you see things as if you were outside your own body doing it?
  - Did you see things as if watching a video of yourself doing it?
  - In your imagery, could you hold on to the feeling or image throughout the skill or

sequence?

**Concentration or Focus:** "Focus is arguably the most important mental skill. It is the central component of many athletes' best performances or zone experiences and the key component in the concept of 'FLOW', the process of total absorption in an activity. The ability to be able to completely focus on the task at hand, attend and respond appropriately to all relevant cues, and be undisturbed by distractions and elements both within and outside athletes' control, can contribute significantly to desired performance outcomes. During practice new skills are learned, old skills practiced and adjusted as necessary, strategies and decision making skills challenged and relevant cues identified. Being able to focus well during practice will enhance athletes' learning and retention and cement key performance components required for competition (Farres, A mental training tool: Assessment as a learning tool, 2000, p. 4)."

- Before practice, if you are thinking about a problem related to home, school or a relationship, are you able to shift gears and leave those concerns behind from the duration of the practice?
- Do you know what kind of focus allows you to perform best in practice situations?
- What is your best practice focus?
- During your practice when there are breaks in the action, how successful are you at allowing yourself to take a mental break when it might be helpful?
- During practices there are a number of things that can be distract athletes or take them away from their best focus. After each of the situations listed below indicate how successful you are at getting back on track, into a positive performance focus:
  - Making an error or screwing up?
  - Coach getting on your case or making a negative comment?
  - Negative thoughts or worries about teammates?

- Negative thoughts or worries about being monitored or evaluated?
- Negative thoughts or worries about being ready for competition?
- Negative thoughts or worries about possibly failing?
- Negative thoughts or worries about getting hurt or being injured?

**Self talk:** Self-talk is a steady stream of thoughts that fill your head with personal intrinsic conversation.

This conversation is going on always, some of the conversation is positive and helpful; the other conversation is the critique and is negative and unhelpful. Self talk will determine the mood that you are in, the way that you perform, and the emotions that come out in your behaviors (Burton & Raedeke, 2008).

- While pitching does is feel that you have a conversation in your head?
- What things do you say to yourself?
- What do you do when the conversation becomes negative?
- Do you feel that your inner critic is controlling your thoughts? If so when?