



Intro to Sport Psychology

Volume 02

ARIZONA

Hi Wildcats,

The best athletes are not always the strongest, the fastest, or the swiftest. Nevertheless, it would be foolish to ignore genetic and physical training factors. Engineered weight training, which was the dominant answer to performance enhancement in the last thirty years, has clearly increased muscle growth, strength, endurance, and speed.

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However, engineered weight training is reaching its ceiling. Tendons and ligaments cannot handle the weight and increased torque generated by the engineered muscles. Similarly, research on human reaction time suggests athletes by nature are too slow. For example, the time it takes to commit to a quick action (i.e. first step, pump fake, throwing a pitch, etc.) is approximately 100 milliseconds. Comparatively, the time it takes to counter the action (i.e. blocking the shot) averages 200 milliseconds.

Thus, if the physical growth is at a plateau and reaction times are inefficient, then what is the next training edge to improve performance? One possible answer is psychological skills training.

New Field:

Sport psychology is a relatively new field. For many of you, this may be your first introduction to this service. Sport psychology has two components:

- 1) providing performance enhancement techniques so an athlete can advance his or her performance from good to great
- 2) providing counseling to help an athlete who may be struggling on and off the field.
 - With regard to the second component, it is important to note the benefits of therapy. A student-athlete's life and demands are hectic. Thus, how often do you take a few minutes for yourself?

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BEAR DOWN

Emotions

A common symptom that leads people to seek counseling is difficulty sleeping or distractions when performing. Dealing with an emotional issue is very difficult during the day because you don't have the time to process what you are feeling. Thus, your mind has two choices:

- 1) process your feelings while performing daily tasks which may lead to you feeling distracted and not fully focused, or
- 2) process your feelings during the only time when it is relatively quiet with few distractions.

The Result

For many of us, the only time in our day that is quiet is when we are lying in bed trying to sleep. As a result, you will lie in bed trying to sleep only to have thoughts and feelings intrude. An alternative to processing your circumstance when you should be sleeping or performing is to meet with a counselor. It is amazing how taking 45 minutes a week to sort something out leads to benefits for the other

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6 days, 23 hours, and 15 minutes of the week. Additionally, knowing that you have a set time to sort your issues out allows you to focus on your task at hand. For example, you can think – class is time to focus on school; practice is time to focus on sport; and our meetings would be time to focus on you.

A Solution

If you would like to feel more confident; if you would like to discuss techniques for anxiety; if you would like to meet and discuss other benefits of sport and clinical psychology;

or if you are feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, stressed out, frustrated, worried, sad, or lacking confidence, please contact Angie at 621-8805 or ask your athletic trainer to schedule an appointment. I look forward to working with you.

Best Wishes,
Scott Goldman, Ph.D.

*Sport and Clinical Psychologist
for Student-Athletes*

To schedule an appointment, call **621-8805, 621-3334**, or ask your athletic trainer for assistance.