



Pre Game Mental Preparation

Do you ever stop and wonder whether elite hockey players have a sound game day mental training plan in place? The answer is an emphatic, yes! Top hockey players don't spend game day worrying about when and what to eat, what time to get to the rink, and what things to think about. Rather, they have a sound plan that is put into action every game day. Listed below are some suggestions to help you develop a sound pre game mental plan.

Good Training during the Week: People are able to focus solely on their hockey skills if they have had a good week of training. This means ensuring that you are physically fit, that you are eating and sleeping well, that you are practicing your techniques/skills, and that you understand your coaches' game plan. Mental training works best when the physical, tactical, and technical aspects of training are already in place.

Positive Mood: Focus on doing what is right rather than what is wrong. Focus on doing your best; don't worry about the standings of the other team or something related to evaluation or outcome. Talk as if hockey is enjoyable, beneficial, and extremely valuable.

Visualization: It helps to play the game in your mind before it even happens. Spend a few minutes thinking about your upcoming opponent and what sort of things you can do to help your team win. Perhaps it is a certain move on a goalie or defenseman, a strategy on a face-off or power play, a specific check on a strong opponent, or just a general image of feeling good about yourself.

Positive Self-Talk: A positive attitude can be psychologically advantageous, so do your best to support your team and remember one very important point --- Complaining is Contagious!!!

Increase Your Activation Level: Move to activate yourself; right here, right now

Finish Dressing and Final Preparation: Be calm, confident, and ready to go! Remember that everyone has a different level of arousal prior to the game; make sure you know what works best for you!

On Ice Warm-Up: This is a time to get ready for the game. Make sure your passes are crisp, your shots are strong, you get the feel of the puck, and your mind is focused on the task at hand.

Gordon A. Bloom, Ph.D.

Dept. of Physical Education

McGill University