

Feel Good..... Play Well

The better you feel the better you will perform. This is true in sports and in school. The object of "Mental Training" is to learn how to control your feelings by practicing positive thinking. The sooner you learn to handle your emotions, the sooner you will be on track to playing your best.

For example what is your response when your team gets scored on.... write it down....describe what you do when it happens. Do you shake your head? grit your teeth? or swear? these are normal... **NEGATIVE RESPONSES**. These will hurt you and your team for they create negative thoughts and negative energy.

How can you help that? In a negative state your concentration, your coordination, and your strength are affected reducing your ability to play at your best. You have to learn to change your reaction from a negative response to a **POSITIVE** one. That is done by following these steps:

- 1. Write down what bothered you most in a game? There are many possibilities...like a referees' call, making a mistake, the coach yelling or even a teammate who takes a dumb penalty.**

THREE THINGS THAT BOTHERED ME MOST LAST GAME WERE:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

- 2. Write down what you did when those things happened?**

Did you clench your fist? Swear? Shake your head? Some of us are teeth gritters, others may put their head down... but we all have a habit of reacting to certain things in different ways. This exercise helps you learn about what you react to and how you react. This is the first stage to developing a positive mental state which will help you perform. You must "KNOW YOURSELF."

It is a good idea to discuss these reactions as a team. Knowing what bothers us as a team and talking and even laughing about it will help you. Your teammates and the coach react more positively in the future. You are learning that Hockey needs mental skills as well as physical. The “team talk” is a good activity and the coaches can share what bothers them (stressors) with the players. You are all in the Game together learning to deal with the mental and physical challenges... learning to be the “best you can be.”

3. For each situation that bothered you; write down some positive thoughts that help you realize that it is not the end of the game.... There is lots of time to play... You may get help from your coach or teammates to complete this.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. The final step in learning to develop emotional control is to make up a “cue” word or phrase that keeps your mind in focus...your thoughts positive to perform at your best for the entire game. One example could be.... “change the channel”.....

MY CUE WORDS THAT WILL HELP ME STAY SHARP:

Follow these steps after each game. You will notice that you will not be as upset about things. You will help each other to stay positive and focused. Your team will have more discipline, energy and spirit.

Share this program with your parents and coaches. It is used by many athletes to develop mental skill that will be useful in the Game of Hockey as well as the game of life.