

33 Mental Topics

It's important to talk to your athlete or athletes before practice starts. Think of this as the mental warm up. This is a great chance to clear the athlete's mind of any drama from the day and set mental expectations for practice. Technical issues can be addressed here as well as going over schedules, handing out instructions and other logistical details. This is also a great time to bring up any issues that may be lingering with your athlete/s and how they should be striving to handle them. It is important to try to stay in tune with what is going on in your athletes lives and address things they may be dealing with either individually or if appropriate during the pre-practice speeches.

Mental Topics

1. Importance of being a good sport but knowing the importance of competing against teammates but most importantly, themselves to make each other better when training or practicing.
2. Discuss the importance of imagery. We want to be have them visualize themselves going through each lift prior to doing it. Visualization will help in practice, before games and before training sessions.
3. Talk about the importance of listening to the coach and not being afraid to pay the price for success. Too many people want to find shortcuts around the right way to get the results they want. This may work once in awhile but it will catch up to you when it counts.
4. Realize that you'll always be able to find someone to tell you the easier road is acceptable, but that doesn't make it right.
5. Talk about the importance of responding the right way to adversity. Injuries, losses, etc. are inevitable in an individual's sports career. Responding well to these setbacks and learning from them will ultimately determine the growth and success of that individual.
6. Keeping a consistent, hard-working attitude in practice and training will translate to consistent growth in athletics.
7. Come in to every practice or workout with at least one thing in mind that you want to improve on. Don't remain stagnant by simply "going through the motions" in practice or

training. The best athletes are always looking to improve on their skill set and train intensely. Remember... hard work pays off.

8. Write out your long term and short term goals for your sports career. Then write out your plan that you intend to follow in order to reach those goals.
9. Set your goals high, and train to achieve them. Even though you may fall short of these goals, your end result will often be better than the guy who set mediocre goals.
10. Stress the importance of progressive resistance when training. Challenging yourself to get stronger will improve your physical abilities as well as confidence.
11. Never “take a back seat” to anyone. This means practicing and training as hard as you can against everyone you compete with in practice, even if they have typically beaten you in the past. This consistent, hard work ethic during practice will develop into a habit. This habit will translate into competing harder against even the “superstars” in competition. Eventually you will become that athlete and teammate that many of your opponents will look up to.
12. Focus on what you’re good at rather than solely focusing on what you need to work on. Always focusing on your negative qualities will lower your confidence in practice and in competition.
13. Find quotes that you like from your favorite high-level athletes and tape them in your locker, bedroom, or wherever you may see that quote a lot.
14. Confidence comes naturally for some, but most athletes are forced to develop their confidence from habit. Improving your posture and acting more confident in and outside of practice or training will help in building your confidence. These changes may feel awkward and unnatural at first, but eventually these changes will develop into a habit and will start to feel natural.
15. Find great athletes online who have a similar physical style to you. Watch what they do well and start to emulate their techniques.
16. There is no certain athletic style that is best for every individual. Individuals have different body types and athletic abilities. Understand your body type and athletic ability, and use this knowledge to develop an athletic style that is best for you.
17. Never be afraid of failure. It’s going to happen. The best athletes have all failed many times throughout their careers. The difference between them and the rest of their competition is their ability to learn from this failure and use it as a tool for improvement.
18. Focus on the process rather than the outcome. Instead of determining all of your success by wins and losses, focus on all of the time and effort that you spent in training. Focus on how all of your hard work made you a better person on and off the field, court or mat. This shift in focus will take a lot of pressure off of you when you go into competition.
19. Doing something “hard” on a regular basis and pushing yourself past your limits will make you much more prepared for those tough, grueling competitions during the season where the guy who is mentally stronger often comes out on top.

20. On any given day, anyone is beatable. Don't ever allow yourself to think that you lost before you start.
21. Living out the right lifestyle outside of practice and training is also vital to an individual's success and growth in the sport. This includes getting proper nutrition, getting enough sleep, and avoiding certain extracurricular activities that many of your buddies who don't have the same goals as you may be doing.
22. Surround yourself with individuals who have the same goals and desire for success as you. This may mean cutting ties with old friends. The people you surround yourself with have a huge impact on your lifestyle habits in and outside of the team.
23. Your mentality when in practice must be different from your mentality outside of the practice room. You can be a nice guy outside of the room, but once practice starts, you need to be more selfish and committed.
24. Lead by example in practice, whether you are a Freshman or a Senior. Your teammates will see your success and begin to follow your lead.
25. The best training and practices in the world are meaningless if you don't give your body proper sports nutrition. If you're serious about being a better athlete, you must fuel it with nutritionally-dense foods that will build lean tissue, help you recover and avoid injuries, and keep you alert and focused.
26. During a game or competition, dig deep into your memory bank and think about all of the hard work you have put in to get there. Concentrate on that and let it build up inside you to get you motivated.
27. Always force yourself to work as hard as possible in practice. Give yourself a grade to shoot for in practice. If your effort isn't an "A" every time, you have to dig deeper..
28. Pre-practice or games aren't a time to gorge yourself. Eating and/or drinking too much before competition is a great way to have a terrible day. A good, sample pre-game or practice meal would be a gatorade, protein bar, and a banana.
29. Getting a good, thorough warm up before training, practice or competition is vital to having a good athletic event. You want to increase the synovial fluid in the joints and warm up the muscles and cardiorespiratory system. Your body will be loose, which will prevent injuries and help you perform better. Your mind will also be much more relaxed, which will release pre-competition nerves.
30. Consistency is the key to being successful at sports and at life. Being consistent with your diet, social habits, and work ethic, no matter the circumstances, will ultimately determine your success in sports.
31. Keep a short term memory. Don't let your ego get too high after a win, and don't let your ego get too low after a loss. Too high of an ego can lead to complacency. On the other hand, too low of an ego can result in lowered confidence. Learn from both experiences, but don't dwell on them. Use them both as a way to continue to get better.

32. Try and get 1% better every day. Rather than focusing on your competition, focus on making yourself 1% better than you were the day before.
33. In competition, only focus on what you can control. If the referee makes a bad call, shrug it off and continue looking to compete at your best. Dwelling on and complaining about the bad call is counterproductive because you will only compete worse.