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# Mental skills training for student athletes

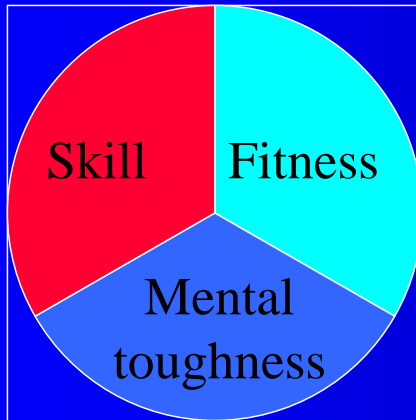
Peter C. Terry

University of Southern Queensland

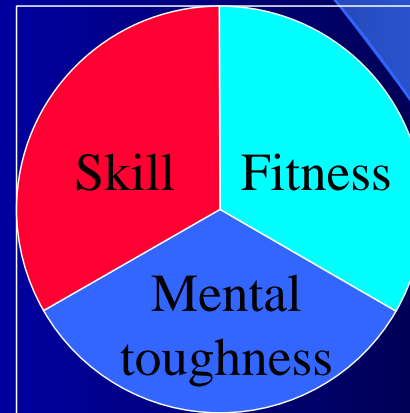
EW Barker Visiting Professor

# Why mental skills?

Demands of the sport?



Preparation for the sport?



Is there a discrepancy? Is this logical?

# The ideal performer?

- Necessary physical attributes
- Outstanding skills
- Controlled under pressure
- Excellent focus
- Unshakeable confidence
- Great work ethic

# Why mental skills?

- Psychology is a key component in performance
- It should not be the random factor
- Mental skills are life skills

# What type of athlete?

- Greatest impact among elite athletes BUT
- Relevant to all athletes, at all levels, in all sports

# Motivation

Goals should be:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime-related
- **E**valuated
- **R**ecorded

# Goal setting

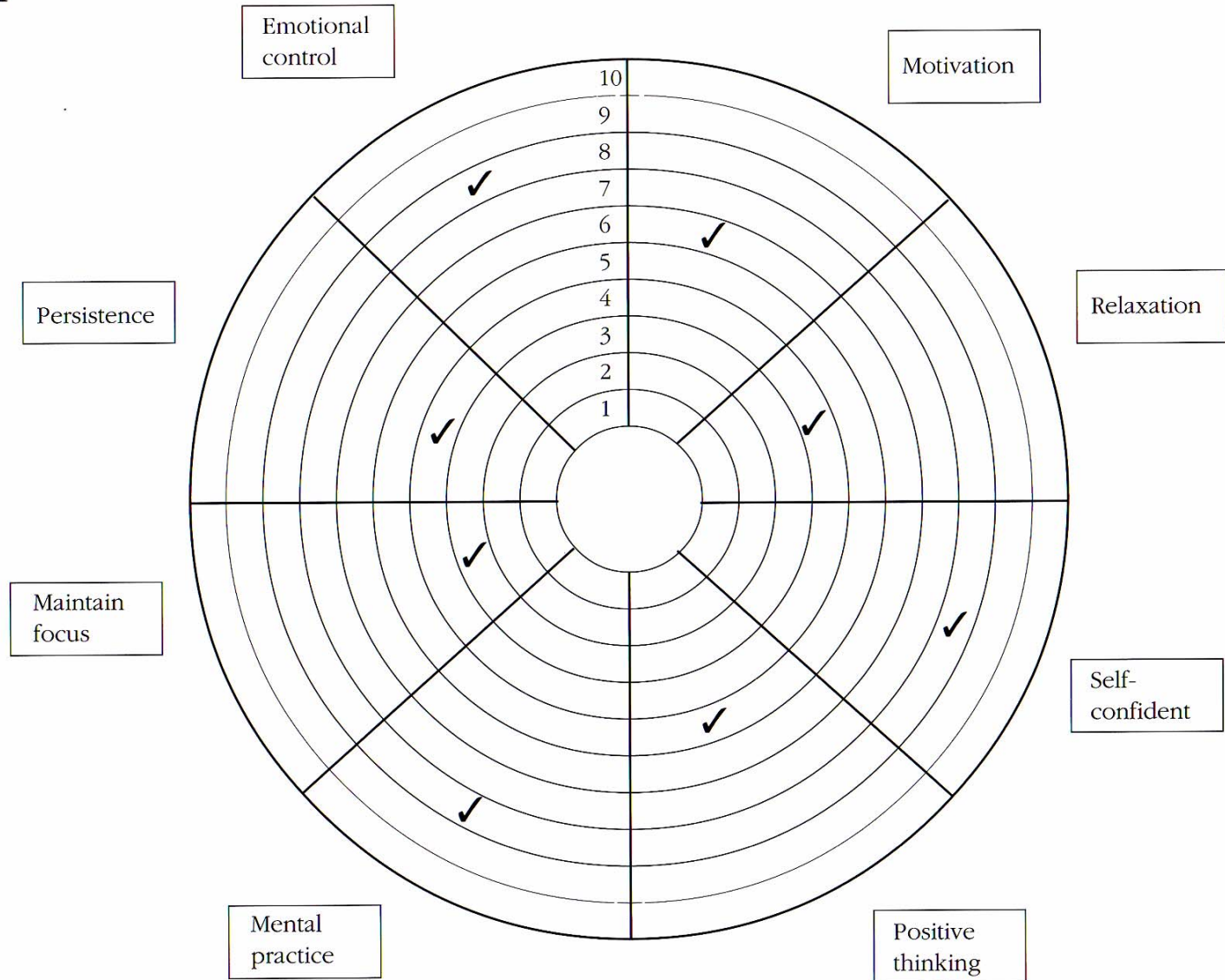
- Emphasise the process rather than the outcome
- Example of Singapore Rugby Sevens

# Token rewards

- **Simplicity**
- **Consistency**
- **Observation**
- **Reward**
- **Explanation**

# Performance profiling

*Example*



# Commitment

- “I am not involved in tennis, I am committed to it. Do you know the difference between involvement and commitment?”
- ❖ “It’s like the difference between egg and bacon. The chicken is involved but the pig is committed”  
(Martina Navratilova)

# Concentration

- **Keywords**
  - e.g., “Keep it smooth”, “Fight”
- **Race plans**
  - Pre-race, start line, middle section, finish
- **Self-talk**
  - World’s best coach
- **Memory aids**
  - Sticky dots
  - Letters on hand



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# Imagery

- The WYSIWYG principle
- What you SEE is what you get
- What you SAY is what you get

# Performance routines

- Performance routines
  - ABC approach (Affect, Behaviour, Cognition)
  - 4-R approach (Reaction, Recovery, Refocus, Ritual)

# How to make you jump further?

A volunteer from the  
audience please



*THE  
GREATEST  
SHOW  
ON EARTH*



# OLYMPIC STRESSORS

- Competition stress
- Accreditation/security
- Queues
- Family/friends
- Boredom/time management
- Homesickness
- Travel fatigue/jetlag
- Selection
- Media intrusion
- Local transport
- Accommodation
- Nutrition/hydration
- Climate

# Management of depressed mood

Most *effective* strategies are:

- ✓ Think positively
- ✓ Deal with the cause of the feelings
- ✓ Talk to someone about my feelings
- ✓ Put feelings into perspective
- ✓ Seek physical affection
- ✓ Think about something else

(Terry, Dinsdale, Karageorghis, & Lane, in preparation)

# Management of fatigue

Most *effective* strategies are:

- ✓ Relaxation techniques
- ✓ Take a shower
- ✓ Rest, take a nap or sleep
- ✓ Put feelings into perspective
- ✓ Have a massage
- ✓ Deal with the cause of the feelings

(Terry, Dinsdale, Karageorghis, & Lane, in preparation)

# Pre-performance

- Strategies are sometimes counter-intuitive
- Audley Harrison, Olympic Super-heavyweight Boxing Champion listened to Japanese classical music
- Used to induce relaxation rather than aggression

# Management of vigour

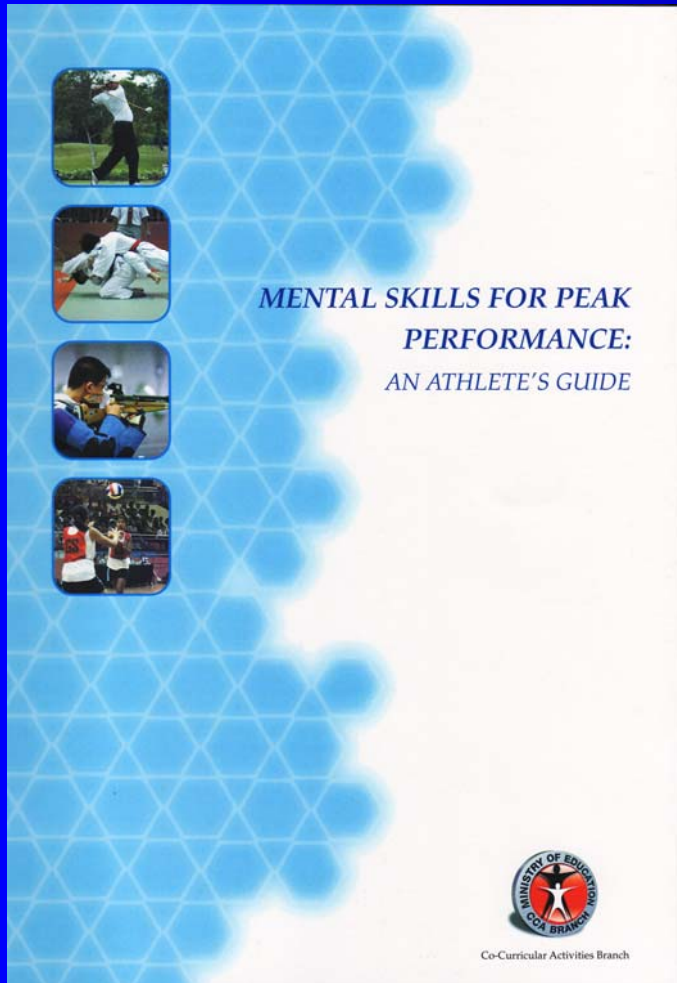
Most *effective* strategies are:

- ✓ Physical activity
- ✓ Think positively
- ✓ Sport-related imagery
- ✓ Fast, upbeat music
- ✓ Focus on competition strategies
- ✓ Put feelings into perspective

(Terry, Dinsdale, Karageorghis, & Lane, in preparation)

# Resources

Dr John Wang, JY Chow, Dr Bervyn Lee, Balbinder Singh, Mae GH Ng



- Knowing yourself
- Profiling
- Effective goals
- Self-confidence
- Concentration
- Handling pressure
- Imagery
- Performance routines

# Resources on the web

- [www.mindtools.com](http://www.mindtools.com)
- [http://counseling.uchicago.edu/resources/virtual\\_pamphlets/stress.shtml](http://counseling.uchicago.edu/resources/virtual_pamphlets/stress.shtml)

# Thank you for your attention

