

It's all about great team work!



Preamble

The following psychological resource for participants and athletes, has been developed by sport psychologist Fiona McCarthy on behalf of the NSW Office of Sport, as a key initiative of the NSW Government's Future Champions strategy.

For more information on Future Champions, please visit www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development

Getting to know the author

Fiona McCarthy is a registered psychologist, specialising in sport psychology and is a member of the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian College of Sport and Exercise Psychologists. Fiona owns and operates Mind and Body Balance, a business she established 25 years ago.

Fiona is the Hunter Academy of Sport, Sport Psychology Consultant and a New South Wales Institute of Sport, Sport Psychology Service Provider. Over the last twenty-

five years, Fiona has assisted many teams, athletes, parents and coaches in the areas of confidence, concentration, handling pressure, motivation, goal setting, time management, performance preparation and general well-being. Fiona has worked with numerous sports, assisting recreational level athletes to professional, international, Olympic and Paralympic level athletes, reach their full potential.



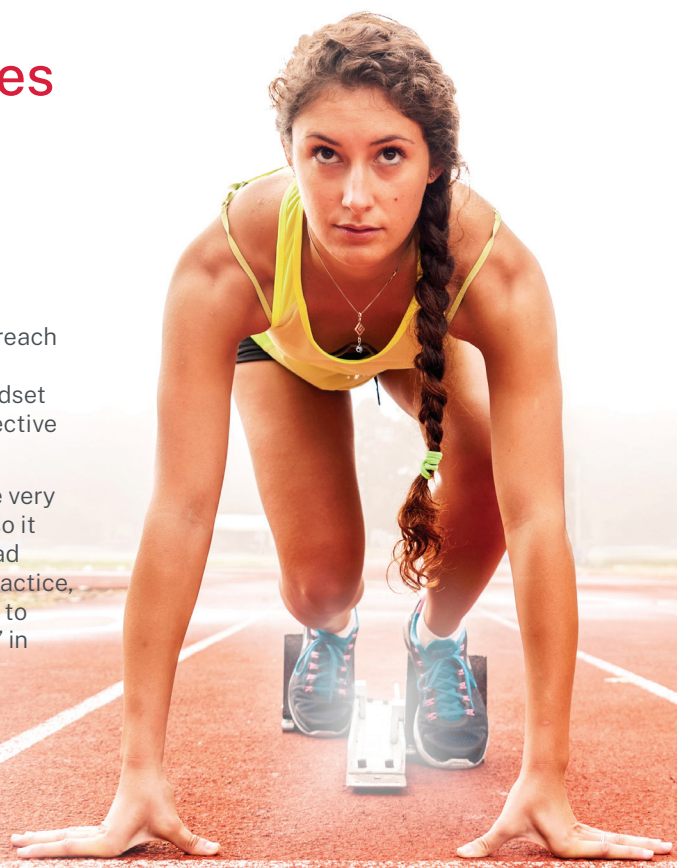
Background to these resources

The importance of having a mental 'tool kit' to support your learning, performance and engagement on and off the sporting field.

The following resources have been developed by Fiona McCarthy to assist athletes at all levels, in understanding the importance of having a suite of mental 'tools' at their disposal. These 'tools' are practical and multidimensional and will help athletes learn and develop the necessary mental skills they require to help them navigate their way through their sporting journey with a positive mindset and achieve success on and off the field.

It is well recognised that to reach the pinnacle within sport, an athlete needs a superior mindset consisting of strong and effective mental skills and strategies.

Importantly, mental skills are very intertwined and integrated, so it is recommended that you read about and put into regular practice, a number of these resources to strengthen the 'mental tools' in your kit bag!



It's all about great team work !

Strategies for building team harmony and being a valued team member.

1. Get to know your teammates	<p>The more you understand about a person, the easier it is to accept that person for their similarities and differences to you. It's easy to be critical and negative about a person you do not understand.</p> <p>Take time, listen, observe and get to know each of your teammates. Everyone has their own story and journey. We can learn from everyone, so be willing to learn without judgement.</p>
2. Give positive feedback to your teammates whenever you get the chance.	<p>Simple statements like "great shot, or "good effort", or "I knew you could do it", help to build strong, positive relationships.</p> <p>Be positive and supportive verbally to your fellow players, and avoid critical, negative feedback. In other words, get into the habit of saying things to your teammates that build them up and avoid saying things that put them down.</p>
3. Be supportive of yourself and others	<p>When you are dedicated and committed, you encourage others to do likewise. Never underestimate the power of your example in building team spirit.</p> <p>Some days are going to be more challenging than others, and that is ok. Be kind to yourself when you are feeling a bit 'out of sorts' and be kind to your teammates when they are feeling this way.</p>
4. Both negativity and positivity are highly contagious!	<p>Don't be fooled into believing that your negative attitude isn't affecting your team. Negativism can spread through a team very quickly.</p> <p>Be mindful of what you think and say. Start a flow of positive energy, enthusiasm and excitement in your team by being optimistic and positive.</p>
5. Resolve conflicts with teammates or coaches as quickly as possible.	<p>Don't let conflicts build up inside. Talk things through with the appropriate people in a positive manner at an appropriate time.</p>



<p>6. Be fully responsible for yourself.</p>	<p>Don't get into the habit of blaming the coach or teammates for your poor performance. Blaming the coach or your teammates when things don't go well for you, serves no useful purpose.</p> <p>Work within constructive channels to produce positive changes. Blaming only serves to undermine team harmony.</p> <p>Be honest with yourself and use good self-reflection and maximise your self-regulation.</p>
<p>7. Be determined, dedicated and self-disciplined.</p>	<p>Self-starters are extremely valuable team members. They often become the triggers for positive momentum.</p> <p>Be a model of positive energy.</p>
<p>8. Communicate clearly, honestly, and openly with your coach and fellow players.</p>	<p>To achieve a high level of team harmony, the communication between you, your coach and fellow teammates must be healthy. The better you understand each other, the better your chances are of performing well.</p>
<p>9. Don't forget to have fun!</p>	<p>Being able to laugh and to loosen up a little often, breaks down barriers and helps people to relax and feel more connected.</p> <p>Remember, when you can enjoy yourself, you can perform!</p>
<p>10. Good values and team culture.</p>	<p>Establishing and practicing positive team values and culture are extremely important qualities for a team to be happy and successful.</p> <p>The way in which a team operates and embraces all of its team members embracing differences and similarities without judgement is vitally important.</p> <p>Remember a teammate's strengths may compliment rather than challenge your weaknesses and vice versa.</p> <p>Working together, acknowledging and adhering to team values, like mutual respect, embracing differences and supporting each other, are great building blocks for positive team cohesion.</p>





The following exercises may aid in the development of positive team behaviour

1. Providing the team with as much information as possible. For example, give the team members well in advance, the times and places of the training sessions and anticipated competitions.
2. Set team and individual short, intermediate and long-term goals, this allows the players and the team to remain focused, motivated and dedicated to achieving the goals.
3. Schedule regular team meetings. Such meetings will encourage open communication, discussion of and listening to problems, and create a greater understanding of “team” direction. Together, everyone achieves more.
4. Each player on the team must learn to accept their role in the team and must believe and understand that their input into the team is important and valued.
5. Develop team social events like a bowling night, movie day, cooking classes, trivia night!
6. Ensure training and team meetings have variety and are balanced.
7. Develop positive team slogans and key words. These may be linked to core values of the team.

For example, my team’s slogan is:

F.U.N. Focus, Unity and Never give up

Remember:

Good team cohesion can promote team satisfaction and **successful, enjoyable performances for all team members and coaches.**

We hope you liked our tips

Have FUN building your psychological skills and strategies and put them into practice in and out of sport!

Remember importantly, if you are unsure of any of these tips or require further advice, please talk to your Coach, Parent or consult a Sport Psychologist.

You might like to check out our NEW animated YouTube video, Developing your mental 'tool kit' to support you in and out of sport featured within the NSW Office of Sport's Pathways and Development webpages @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development>.

Check out more tips for Participants @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/social-and-recreational-sport-participants>

And our tips for Emerging and High-Performance Athletes @ <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/emerging-athletes>



**Future Champions -
Developing your
mental 'tool kit' to
support you in and out
of sport.**

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