

HEADSTRONG!

Summer - 2009

THE MENTAL *EDGE* ~ GAIL ROYCE ~ 10045 Morningside Dr. ~ Morrison, CO, 80465 ~ 303-697-6389 ~ mental_coach1@msn.com

Yay- it's finally summer! The sunshine, warmth, and long daylight hours are definitely a GOOD thing!

I did have a fun and productive winter & spring. I had some amazing ski days at Keystone and participated in the Wildhare Snowshoe Race at Snow Mtn. Ranch. It's a great women's event that raises money for grants awarded to local female athletes. (Go to The Sporting Woman Community Fund if interested in applying.) But my main winter focus was starting a new strength training program. My workouts had gotten a little stale and I've been frustrated with my injuries not healing, so I thought I'd try something different. And I must say, the workouts have definitely kicked my butt! I'm not sure how much they've helped my injuries or if I'll be able to really train & compete this summer. But I've done more pull-ups, push ups, and core work in five months than in my entire lifetime of working out! Ouch!

My summer kicked off coaching with Olympic medalist (and nice guy) Sasha Artemev at CATS Gymnastics Camp. And I was honored to be a guest speaker at Ed McCaffrey's Football Camp. Summer will bring workshops in Albuquerque and the U.S. Olympic Training Center. The Copper Triangle Alpine Cycling Classic (80 miles, 3 mountain passes) is on for August 1, so I'll be putting in some long training miles on the bike.

To those of you out of school for the summer- ENJOY!! Have fun at your camps and use the extra time to improve a weakness in your "game" and strengthen a mental area that needs work. Read a biography of a favorite athlete, cross train with a new activity, help coach a younger athlete. Don't sleep away this opportunity to gain an edge on your competition!



In today's world, many things move and happen faster than ever before. High speed internet, cell phones, texting, Twittering, fast food, and ATM's allow us to have whatever we want instantly at our fingertips. And while that can be a good thing in some areas of your life, "instant achievement" is **NOT** a mentality or expectation you should have in your athletic life.

The hard truth is that the road to athletic success is paved with old fashioned **patience, persistence, and quality repetition**. It takes time, hard work and numbers. Yes, the sports world has developed technologies to help us learn and improve in new ways. There are all kinds of gadgets and gizmos to help our training; some very useful, others not so much. But no gadget can speed you through the learning process. There is no gizmo to take the place of daily, sustained effort. No fancy doodad will magically shorten the numbers. If you want to be a successful athlete, you must develop a long-term mindset and drop the expectation that everything should happen for you quickly and easily. You **MUST** do the work.

In his recent book, "Outliers" Malcolm Gladwell explores how and why people are successful. An interesting piece of information he uncovers is that experts have concluded it takes 10,000 hours to achieve true expertise in any area. "In study after study, of composers, basketball players, fiction writers, ice-skaters, concert pianists, chess players, master criminals, this number comes up again and again. Ten thousand hours is equivalent to roughly three hours a day, or 20 hours a week, of practice over 10 years... No one has yet found a case in which true world-class expertise was accomplished in less time. **It seems that it takes the brain this long to assimilate all that it needs to know to achieve true mastery.**" You may not be looking for world-class mastery. But it follows that any high level success is the result of countless hours and attempts.

Did you know it took Michael Johnson (Olympic Champion in the 200 and 400 meters) 10 years to lower his time in the 200 by only 1.5 seconds? That's a snap of the fingers. **PATIENCE!** That Tiger Woods routinely heads to the putting green or driving range after each round in a tournament to correct and perfect his stroke? **REPETITION!** That basketball Hall of Famer Bill Bradley stayed after every team practice in high school, college, and the NBA and required himself to make 15 free throws from five spots on the floor before he could go home? If he missed, he started over. **PERSISTENCE and QUALITY REPETITION!**

So, some points to ponder for your lengthy athletic journey...

- Expecting perfection, proficiency or consistency without putting in the hours and repetitions is an unrealistic expectation.
- Don't be tempted by shortcuts; skipping over solid fundamentals now will come back to bite you in butt the later!
- Athletes learn at different speeds; your progression through certain skills or levels may differ from a teammates; making comparisons will only frustrate you and slow your progress.
- While the repetitions are absolutely essential, the quality of the effort is even more critical.
- Performance enhancing drugs and sugary energy drinks are not an answer to "getting there" quicker and better.
- Always celebrate your small, everyday victories. They're your stepping stones to the big successes.
- As your level in your sport rises, the longer it can take to master new skills or perform them consistently. Be tenacious, but patient with the process.

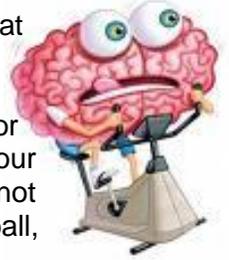
~Gail's Rules for Athletic Success~

Rule #8 - Expect obstacles, mistakes, and failures. Choose to learn & grow from them.

(See "Headstrong" - Winter-'09 for a full article on this rule.)

Rule #9 - Structure your daily training to be equal parts physical and mental.

You know that being successful as an athlete is at least 50% mental. You understand that means at least half of your workout should incorporate mental training. But are you DOING it consistently? Remember to consciously do your visualizations, power statements, breathing and relaxation into every workout. Read through your goals for the season before every practice and set your goals for training that day. Use your cue words in practice, just as you plan to do in competition. Practice your disciplined thinking and positive self-talk during drills and conditioning. The mental toughness will not show up magically on "game day." It needs to be trained right along with your double axel, curve ball, drive serve, three pointer and gnarly hill climb!



CHALLENGING THE ODDS

The Kentucky Derby this year was an inspirational story of an amazing horse and gutsy jockey who challenged the odds. As a late entry, the horse traveled over a thousand miles in a trailer from New Mexico to Kentucky (most horses are flown in luxury). When the horse (described as "small and unexceptional"), trainer (basically unknown-25 years in the business) and jockey arrived, they were snubbed and made fun of. The odds against them winning were 50-1, the weather wasn't great, and the track was muddy and messy. But they didn't listen to the "experts" who said they didn't have a chance, nor did they worry about the difficult racing conditions. They came to compete- and compete they did! Starting as one of the biggest underdogs in the history of the race, they came from the back of the pack, squeezed through a small inside opening, picked off one horse at a time... and then blew the field away! It was a truly spectacular effort. Maybe there's something to be learned from a horse who can't read what the critics say and just goes out and does what he's trained to do!



If you're ever in need of some positive inspiration and motivation, go to the website www.simpletruths.com. Click on the "View Our Inspirational Movies" button and choose a short movie to watch. "The Race" is a good one!



Megan- USA National Karate Championships
Sampson- Firecracker 50 and Summer Races
Clint- Make the team!!!
Jo & Sarah-World Outdoor Racquetball Tourney
Danny- USA Cycling U23 National Championships

Cyndi- 4th Overall Cherry Creek Time Trials
Jenni-Invite to USA Gymnastics Jr. Training camp at Karolyi Ranch
Phoebe- 2nd (artistic), 2nd (long), 1st (short) at Broadmoor Invite
Kathy-8th Overall Cherry Creek time Trials
Karlee- Passed intermediate freestyle test!



Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections but instantly set about remedying them - every day begin the task anew. Saint Francis de Sales

Patience, persistence and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success. Napoleon Hill

There are no shortcuts to any place worth going. Beverly Sills

Learn the art of patience. Apply discipline to your thoughts when they become anxious over the outcome of a goal. Impatience breeds anxiety, fear, discouragement and failure. Patience creates confidence, decisiveness, and a rational outlook, which eventually leads to success. Brian Adams