

HEADSTRONG!

Winter ~ 2006

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

Hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and completion of 2005. The last few months of the year brought me several awesome adventures! 24 Hours of Moab (as athlete support), Football 201 at the Broncos Training Facility, a meeting with Dominique Foxworth of the Broncos, and the Mid-Western Figure Skating Championships. I ended 2005 and launched 2006 in Yellowstone/Old Faithful. I skied the beautiful XC ski trails and saw geysers erupting, bald eagles, moose, and large herds of bison. The great outdoors and lung busting workouts- it doesn't get any better than that!

Now, as we enter a new year, it's good to take some time to reflect on this past year. Think about all that you attempted and all that you accomplished. Consider your setbacks or unrealized goals and determine what you might do differently in the future, or more importantly what great lessons you learned. Then look in the mirror and say "GREAT JOB- YOU'RE AWESOME!" as you give yourself a huge pat on the back for a remarkable year!



Relax ~ Refresh ~ Rejuvenate ~ Replenish ~ Renew ~ Revive ~ Recover!

In the last issue I discussed being passionate about your sport. Now we have to look at the other side of the coin- recovery. In order to remain healthy, happy, and consistently at the top of your game, recovery is an essential component of your training program. And yes, it IS considered a part of your training!

Most of you know the principle of weight lifting; when you lift, you're tearing down muscle fibers. It's during the recovery phase (the 24 hours after) that the muscle is actually rebuilding and strengthening. So it helps to view your rest time in the same way. It's the energy & strength rebuilding phase of your training. Elite, Olympic and Professional athletes all schedule recovery time. We need to follow their example!

I've put together a few suggestions to consider including in your training/recovery plan.

Daily- Create just a few minutes every day for a little breathing space. 5-10 minutes of quiet, uninterrupted mind clearing. Close your eyes, breathe, relax and let go of workouts, school, work, aches, pains and problems. I know you're thinking, "I don't have time for this- I can't sit still that long!" But a short quiet time will help you to be less stressed, have more energy, and allow you to be more productive in the rest of your day.

Monthly- Do something totally unrelated to your sport. See a movie, a play, or a concert. Go for a hike, play ping pong, volunteer for a worthy cause. Go to an art exhibit or the zoo. Find an activity that refreshes your spirit and expands your world. (We don't want to be boring, one-dimensional athletes!)

Annually- When you're developing your training plan, include some time off. Schedule some down time (at least a couple of weeks) at the end of the season. Write on your calendar exactly when you'll start and for how long. Then stick to it! During this time you can be a couch potato, try a new recreational activity, or catch up on your reading. Take a vacation, re-connect with friends and family, plant a garden, build a fort, paint a picture. Whatever you do, smile and enjoy the diversion!

If you're in a long season sport, plan a short (few days) mid-season break. Knowing you have scheduled rest days to look forward to can help you push through long and strenuous training sessions.

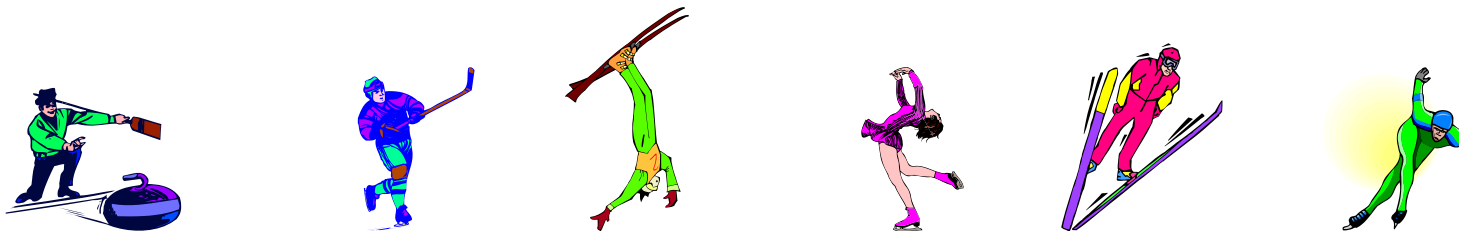
Time away from your sport allows your body to heal those nagging aches & pains and overuse injuries. It gives your mind permission to quiet down, relax, and escape from times, scores, goals, points, coaches, corrections and criticisms. It frees your spirit to refill and nourish itself. When you start training again, you will have a renewed energy, a rekindled enthusiasm, and a rejuvenated passion for life and your sport!

Winter 2006 Athlete Profile



Sampson Bruesewitz Mountain Bike Racer

Way to go Sampson! Sampson competed as a solo racer in the 24 Hours of Moab race in October. For those of you who don't know the event, it's a 15 mile loop mountain bike course, with the goal of riding as many laps as you can in a 24 hour time period. That means riding in the dark, through the night, no sleep, and practically no time off the bike. Ouch! Sampson has ridden the event as part of a team (riders alternate laps) in the past years, but this was his first individual attempt. Out of 1200 competitors, only 52 competed in the solo division and Sampson finished 18th. He spent months and numerous hours of training to build his strength and endurance. The event required a great amount of planning, from having the correct clothing for the changing desert weather, to preparing and planning for food stops, and assembling a support team to help with meals, hydration, mechanicals and motivation. And of course, it took an amazing amount of mental strength- maintaining focus for 24 hours, riding through fatigue and pain, keeping a positive attitude, and resisting the inclination to quit. Not only did Sampson deal with all of these issues awesomely, as the result of a severe knee pain problem he rode the last 15 mile lap with one leg and crossed the finished line smiling! Sampson is one mentally tough athlete. Congratulations!!



The Winter Olympics are coming up! Yay!! Opening ceremonies are February 10. When you have the opportunity, watch some different sports, ones you might not normally see. (Curling, biathlon, and speed skating come to mind!) See if you can learn something new that you might be able to apply to your sport. Observe the athletes and how they recover (or not) from errors and how their performance proceeds. Watch with empathy for the tremendous pressure they're competing under due to personal aspirations, the expectations of family, friends, and their countries, and intense media scrutiny. Be inspired by their dedication, commitment, discipline and stories. Feel the emotion of our national anthem as our athletes stand atop the podium. Watch with the knowledge that you too, as an athlete, are a part of this amazing world of sport and competition. How fortunate you are!

Need a little inspiration? Watch for speakers, workshops, book signings, autograph sessions, or clinics that offer you the opportunity to meet and learn from the best. I met Grete Waitz (famous marathoner) and got her autograph on my race number the day before the NY Marathon- talk about inspiration! Listening to others talk about their training, obstacles, struggles, and successes helps us to create solutions to problems and understand that many of our difficulties are universal in the sports world. The knowledge, energy, and motivation we can take from interacting with successful athletes, writers, actors, teachers, etc. is invaluable. Rubbing elbows with our role models elevates our capacity!

"The mind is the athlete; the body is simply the means it uses to run faster or longer, jump higher, shoot straighter, kick better, swim harder, hit further, or box better."
~Bryce Courtney, *The Power of One* 1992~

"My mind is my biggest asset. I expect to win every tournament I play."
~Tiger Woods~

"Great players never look in the mirror and think, I'm a great basketball player. They ask themselves, "Am I the best player I can be?"
~Michael Jordan~