

HEADSTRONG!

Summer ~ 2006

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

Happy summer! Don't you just love living in Colorado at this time of the year? OK, it's been a little warm and I must say I've been a bit crabby about the wind. But there's so much to do! I've already had some great trail runs and hikes, rollerbladed Glenwood Canyon, swam a few laps, cycled the Elephant Rock Ride, hosted and run the Morningside Breakfast Club Run, and enjoyed a challenging round of golf at Raccoon Creek. Oh yeah - I also competed in my first cycling time trials- what a humbling, painful and exhilarating experience!

I hope you're all taking advantage of the wonderful recreational and athletic opportunities we have in Colorado. (Sorry to those of you who don't live here!) And I challenge you experience an untried sport or activity this summer. Doing so will bring a fresh perspective and improved skill to your main sport. In addition, attempting something new will help you to grow as an athlete and a person.

Happy experimenting!

CONFIDENCE!

So which comes first, confidence or success? Many athletes believe they'll feel truly confident when they attain a certain time or score, reach the "magic" number, win a tournament, or beat a long time rival. But I feel strongly that you must first cultivate the confident mindset. Yes, success always enhances our confidence. But it's necessary to establish a foundation of self-belief to build upon. "Accidental" success creates false and temporary confidence. So, how do you build confidence? I believe that genuine and lasting confidence is the result of the following four components:

1. Complete Physical Preparation

Exerting maximum effort to perfect your sport specific skills. Getting in quality numbers/repetitions. Building your strength, endurance & flexibility by incorporating programs like weight training, Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi, speed work, dance. Adhering to a healthy dietary program including proper hydration and replenishment nutrition. Incorporating good recovery/cross training activities, proper sleep, and massage. Knowing you're "going to the line" as physically prepared as possible automatically instills a level of confidence.

2. Consistent Mental Skills Training

Having a plan for and including mental skills in every training and workout session. Setting significant goals and a creating plan for reaching them. Maintaining a positive and productive attitude during practice. Using your cues, power statements, and visualization techniques in every appropriate situation. Reading sport psychology articles for your sport, consulting with a professional, developing strategies for dealing with mistakes, creating competition/post-competition plans and evaluations. Structured mental practice gives you the effective tools and knowledge to handle any situation.

3. Persistence in the Face of Mistakes, Obstacles, and Failures

Never giving up when the going gets tough! Learning how to work through tough practices, illness, and injury. Being resilient and bouncing back from disappointments, mistakes, and disappointing competitions. Using your "failures" to learn and grow from and to come back a stronger athlete. Your confidence improves incredibly when you make the decision not to surrender to the difficult challenges of your sport.

4. Ability to Experiment Outside Your Comfort Zone

Seizing opportunities to attempt skills and experience situations beyond where you feel comfortable. Taking risks, pushing your physical and mental limits, continually challenging yourself. Learning to "be comfortable with feeling uncomfortable." Just attempting something you've never done before, whether you accomplish it or not, raises your confidence to amazing levels!

So if you want to increase your confidence, review your training in regards to the thoughts above. Look at the things you're consistently doing well and congratulate yourself for the great effort! Then determine the areas where you need some work and make it a priority to improve them. True confidence begins WITHIN YOU- not with wins or the praise of others.

~Gail's Rules for Athletic Success~

Rule #1- Surround yourself with knowledgeable, strong, positive, energetic, and motivating individuals.

As an athlete of any age and any ability level, it's absolutely necessary to gather a team of people around you that will help you succeed. This may mean professional individuals such as your coach, nutritionists, trainers, mental coaches, or massage therapists. But it also includes teammates, teachers, family members, and friends. Make sure the people you spend the most time with are encouraging you in the pursuit of your goals. Choose those who are energetic, help you to feel good about yourself, and provide you with valuable ideas and information. Although how you perform is ultimately up to you, having a strong team of people around you will help you to be a stronger competitor.

Rule #2 next issue!

In the next couple of months there are some great sporting events to watch!

Tour de France US Open Tennis Rockies(they ARE going to the playoffs!)
The International Golf Tournament (GREAT up close and personal opportunity in Denver to see top athletes!)
Bronco's pre-season (already!?) Professional Lacrosse-Outlaws Local running and cycling races

As you watch, think about this month's topic of "confidence." Which athlete's look and act the most confident? What is it they do that makes them appear confident? How well do these athletes perform? What kinds of things do you hear them saying? How do they react when they make a mistake? Are they still appearing confident, even when they're losing?

An excerpt from *Inner Strength* by Ralph Vernacchia, Ph.D

"Ultimately, the athlete who performs effectively realizes that there is no right or wrong way to perform, only different ways, and they have complete confidence in their style or way of doing things and getting things done. The recognition and understanding that peak performance and effective performance are one and the same is a common realization among high achievers in the athletic world. Seasoned athletes focus on self-improvement while everything around them focuses one on the opponent, the "big game," and the score board. They realize that their only control is over their own performance and the execution of their skills especially in light of the many distractions that surround them."

Identify your personal limits, and then push past them. Then set new barriers, and repeat the process, again and again and again.

~Nicole Haislett~
(swimmer- winner of 3 gold medals 1992 Olympics)

There's a fine line between being conceited and having confidence in yourself. Conceit is thinking you can do it without hard work and perseverance.

~Carol Heiss Jenkins~
(Figure skater- Olympic gold medalist)

PLEASE NOTE- In the next issue I'd like to start highlighting some of your wonderful accomplishments. If you'd prefer NOT to have your name published in my newsletter, please email or phone and let me know. Thanks!

Think Strong - Be Strong - Compete Strong!