

HEADSTRONG!

Fall ~ 2007

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

As we approach the upcoming holidays of "thanks and giving", I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for the many things you've given me this past year.

Thank you for consistently challenging me to come up with more creative solutions, for insisting I look at things in a different light, and for always keeping me on my toes.

Thank you for being my inspiration on those days when I lacked the motivation to work out. Thoughts of your effort, discipline, and achievements have frequently pushed me out the door and encouraged me to train harder.

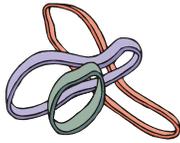
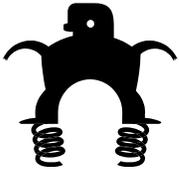
Thank you for allowing me to share the pain of your losses & disappointments and celebrate the joy of your successes.

Thank you for frequently making me laugh, occasionally bringing me to tears, and always being the best part of my day.

Thank you for filling my days with energy, learning, hope, enthusiasm, anticipation, and joy.

Thank you for the wonderful privilege of being a part of your athletic dreams and goals.

Have a Yummy Thanksgiving, Joyful Holidays, and A Happy New Year!



Resilience



There are numerous qualities an athlete must possess in order to be successful- commitment, discipline, determination, focus, persistence, and a strong work ethic- just to name a few. The list is long and it's impossible to prioritize the most important characteristics, as each has its place in various situations. But one trait I would definitely place at the top of the list is resiliency- the ability to recover effectively from setbacks. Successful athletes must be able to repeatedly bounce back from mistakes, falls, failures, losses, injury, illness, criticism and media scrutiny. The most accomplished athletes in any sport aren't the ones who never encounter difficulties or make mistakes. Instead, they're the ones who are able to consistently and powerfully recover from whatever obstacles they do face. How quickly and successfully they choose to rebound from these challenges is what separates the "also-rans" from the champions.

Difficult practices- When you train hundreds of days every year, you're going to have some bad practices. There are days when you'll make mistakes, get yelled at by the coach, or perform well below your ability. You need to accept these days as part of the training process and move through them as quickly as possible. During practice, make the decision to relax, regroup, and do whatever it takes to get through the best you can that day. After practice, ask yourself, "What can I learn from this?" You may be building character, persistence, or sharpening your mental skills. Leave the tough workout on the field, the court, or the ice and consciously decide to return tomorrow a better athlete.

Injury- Rebounding from an injury requires patience & trust. Be patient with the process as your body mends & rehabs. Practice your mental skills- power statements and visualization are very productive. Set some realistic, short term goals for your comeback. Then you need to trust that your body is healed and strong and that you still have the same skills and ability as before your injury.

Mistakes during competition- Replaying a mistake in your mind causes tension in your muscles and a considerable decrease in your focus. With tight muscles and less than 100% focus, chances are good you'll continue to make more mistakes. You MUST deal with and let go of errors as quickly as possible. One of the best strategies is to devise a recovery/refocusing routine. Create a plan ahead of time when you're calm and clear headed. Combine whatever mental skills work best for you and will fit within the time frame of your sport. Make it a habit to execute this recovery plan consistently. I've heard that Tiger Woods allows himself 10 steps after a bad shot to respond to the mistake. On step 11, he's refocusing and preparing for the next shot.

Failures, disappointments, devastating losses- It's difficult to let go of losses. You're emotionally involved and have put your heart and soul into training and competing. So have a plan! Allow yourself a reasonable time to "mourn," work through the feelings, and as one of you likes to say, be "appropriately bummed." Then evaluate your performance; what you did well, what you learned, what you need to do differently in practice. Take a deep breath and blow it away, toss it in the trash, watch it float away on a cloud. Let it go in whatever way works for you. Then turn your vision forward!

I know, all of this is much easier said than done. But try - and keep trying. Commit wholeheartedly to being an athlete who doesn't just bounce back, but bounces back higher, stronger, fitter, faster, smarter, fiercer, and more competitive!

~Gail's Rules for Athletic Success~

Rule #4-Consistently practice with the quality and focus you aspire to have in competition.

It's odd that some athletes fail to connect practice performance with competition performance. They believe they can always "rise to the occasion, do it better on game day." But habits, both mental and physical, are deeply formed during training. The repetitions in practice establish pathways between the brain and body that are accessed in competition. The mind directs the body to do what it's knows best, what it's done the most of. Therefore, half-effort, careless, and incorrect skill execution can only result in following the sub-par performance pathway. Full effort, focus, and quality repetition of skills direct the athlete down the path of success. Consistent and excellent performances can only be the result of consistent and excellent practices.



High Fives To:

Annabel, Braden, Charlie, Katey, Pheobe for your great performances at Southwesterns
Sampson- For your gutsy and amazing ride at 24 Hours of Moab
Alex- State Tennis Qualifier- as a freshman!!
Nico- Making the top ten ranked K State Football team- as a walk on!
Amanda- Receiving a D1 Soccer Scholarship to Drake
Daniel- Making the baseball elite travel team
Kirk- Qualifying to the State High School Soccer Playoffs
Chris- Starting lineup- finally!!



Positive Vibes and Good Luck To:

Darrin- With your new hockey team in Michigan
Hannah- Your '07-'08 college diving season
Jo- Upcoming Pro Tournaments
Kerrick- High School basketball season
Adam- Coming back from your broken collar bone and finishing the season strong with your soccer team
Justine and Courtney-High School diving season- your final one!
Brenna and Meagan- High School basketball season

A Good Read or A Fun Movie!



"The Way of The Peaceful Warrior" is a book written by Dan Millman in 1980. It's a fun and interesting tale, based on true life events, about a college gymnast and Olympic hopeful. He is guided by "Socrates" through an enlightening physical and spiritual journey. The movie, **Peaceful Warrior**, stars Nick Nolte and was recently released on DVD. If you're not a reader, rent the movie. Enjoy!!!



Think Resilient!!

"The harder you fall, the higher you bounce."

Anonymous

"All of us get knocked down, but it's resiliency that really matters. All of us do well when things are going well, but the thing that distinguishes athletes is the ability to do well in times of great stress, urgency and pressure." Roger Staubach

"People who soar are those who refuse to sit back, sigh and wish things would change. They neither complain of their lot nor passively dream of some distant ship coming in. Rather, they visualize in their minds that they are not quitters; they will not allow life's circumstances to push them down and hold them under."

-Charles R. Swindoll