

Coaching Athletes to Perform at their Mental Peak

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Winning the game before the game

90% of the game is half mental



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Coach, I'm nervous



SELF-DOUBT

Oregon ranked 4th in country
1st half = 35-6 (Oregon)
2nd half = 19-7 (Fresno State)





Clearly, I didn't do a good enough job convincing our guys that we were capable of competing with them, as evidenced by how we played in the first half. We had some guys that for whatever reason doubted themselves.



Coach athletes to feel 3 things...

- Optimal pre-competition feeling:

1. Excited

2. Focused

3. Ready



Our Purpose Today

Ensuring your athletes are
**excited, focused and mentally
ready** for competition

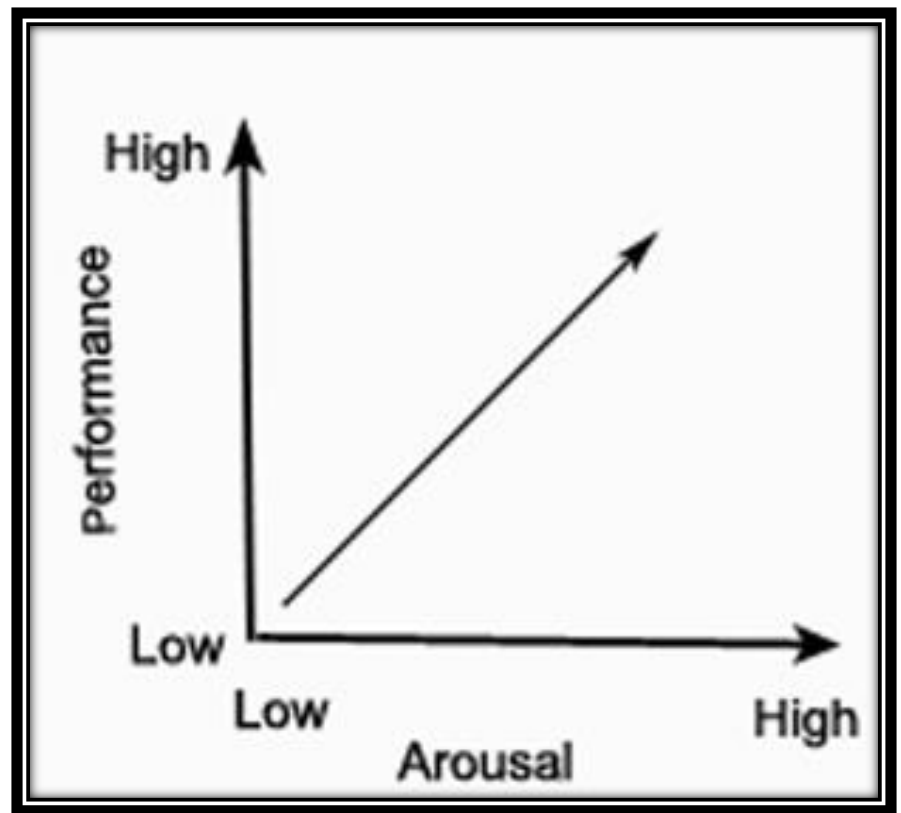
Coaching Mental Readiness

- Webinar Outline:
 1. Helping athletes find their 'readiness zone'
 2. Pre-competition routines for athletes
 3. Pre-competition message

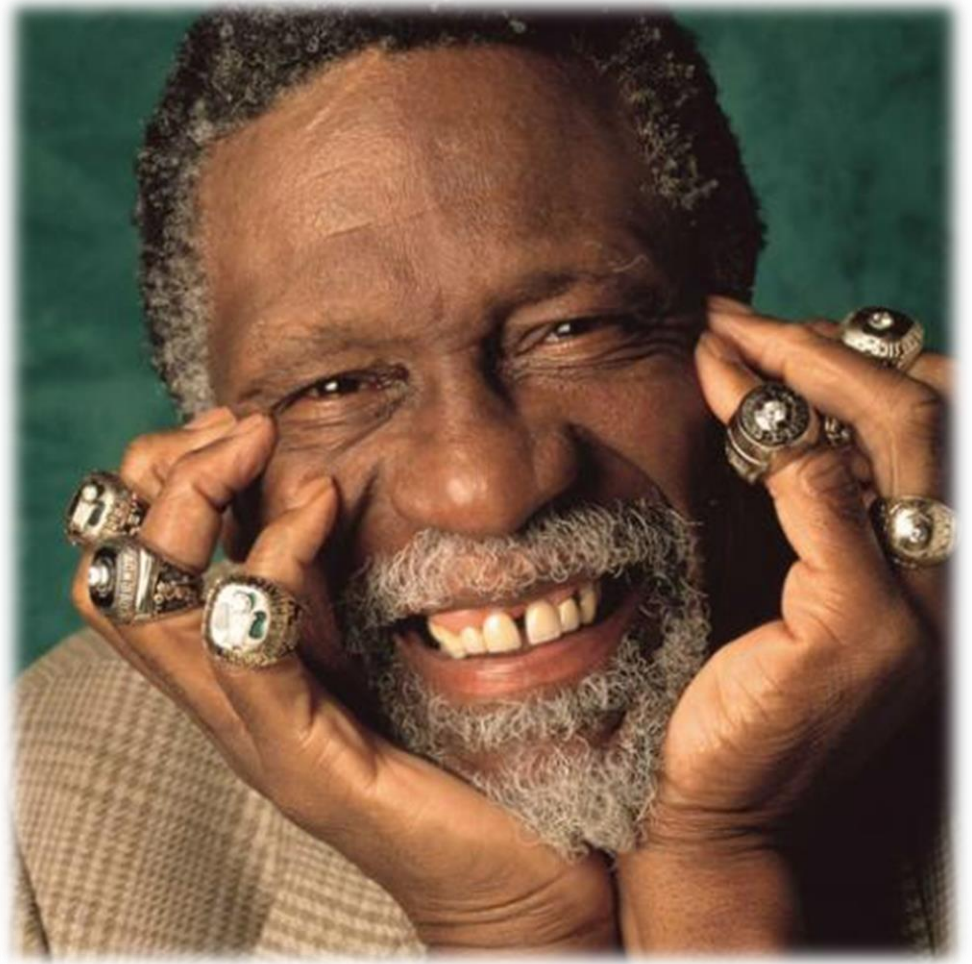
Understanding the 'Zone': From Drive Theory to IZOF



The Beginning: Drive Theory



Bill Russell

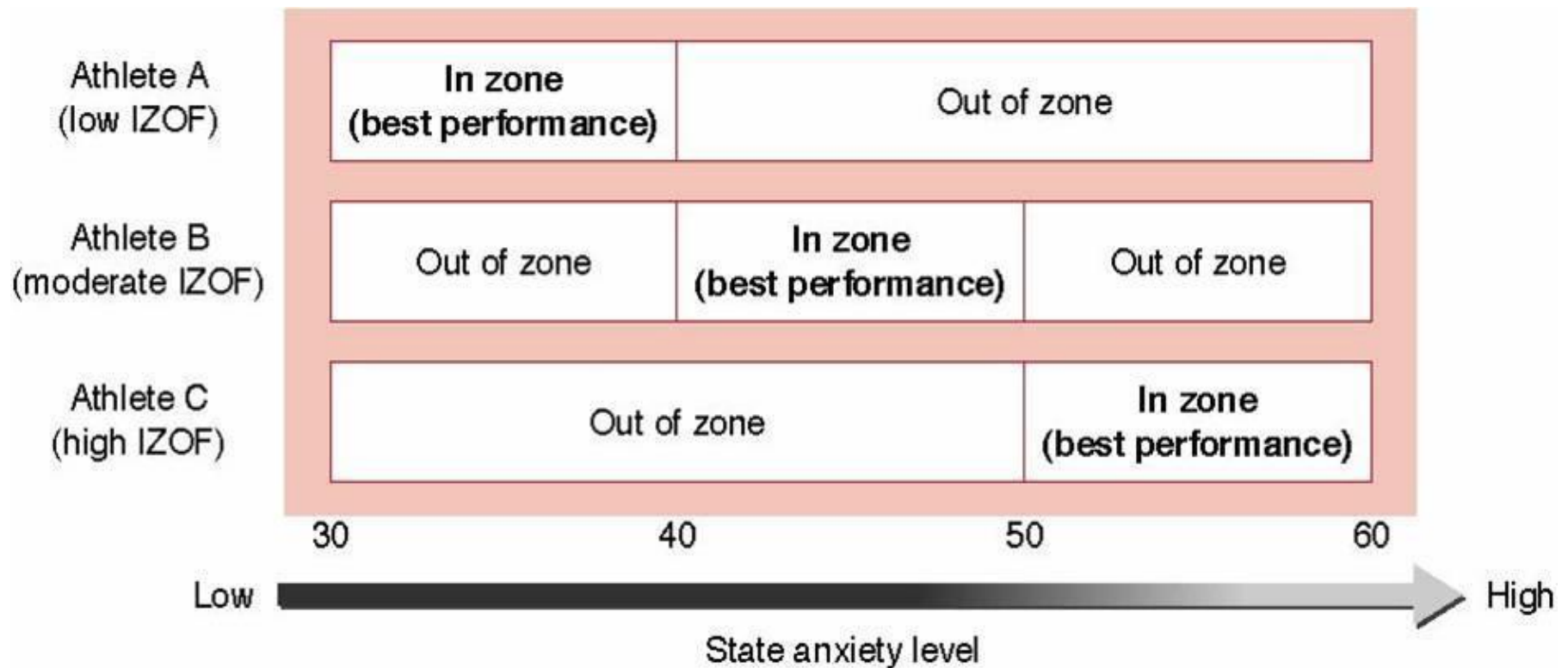


11 NBA championships, 2
NCAA championships,
Olympic gold medal

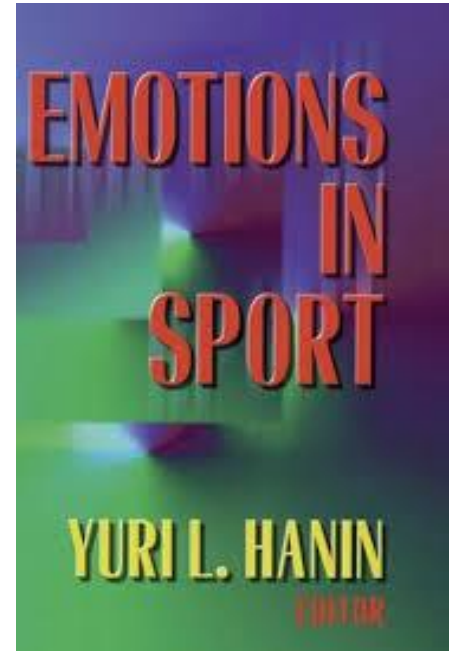


I wanted to be as pumped up as possible. I wanted to be as wound up as Bill Russell who, before almost every game, threw up because he was so psyched about the competition. (Swen Nater, speaking about pre-game preparation)

Individual Zones of Optimal Functioning (IZOF)



**Athlete perception of
how emotion impacts
readiness is the key**





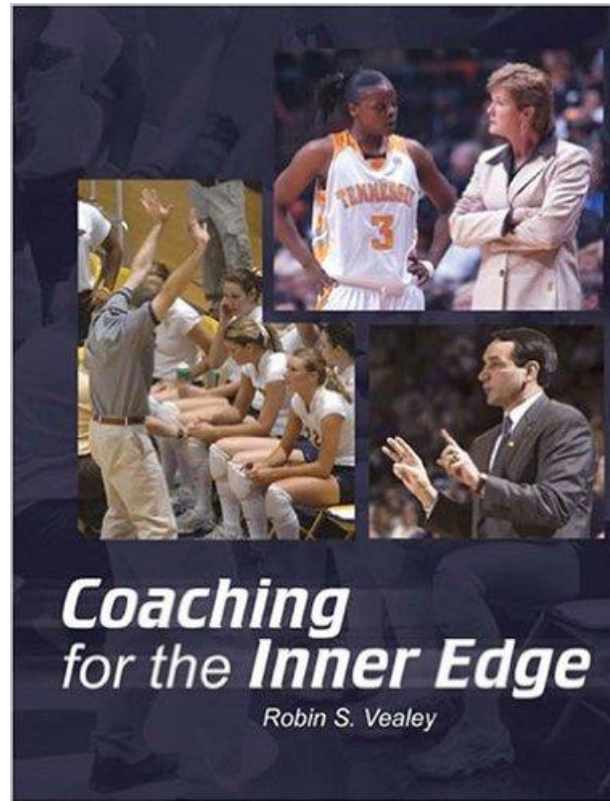
➤ Unpleasant emotions [U]

➤ *Disruptive (-) or helpful (+)???*

➤ Pleasant emotions [P]

➤ *Disruptive (-) or helpful (+)???*

5 Steps to Finding Athlete's IZOF

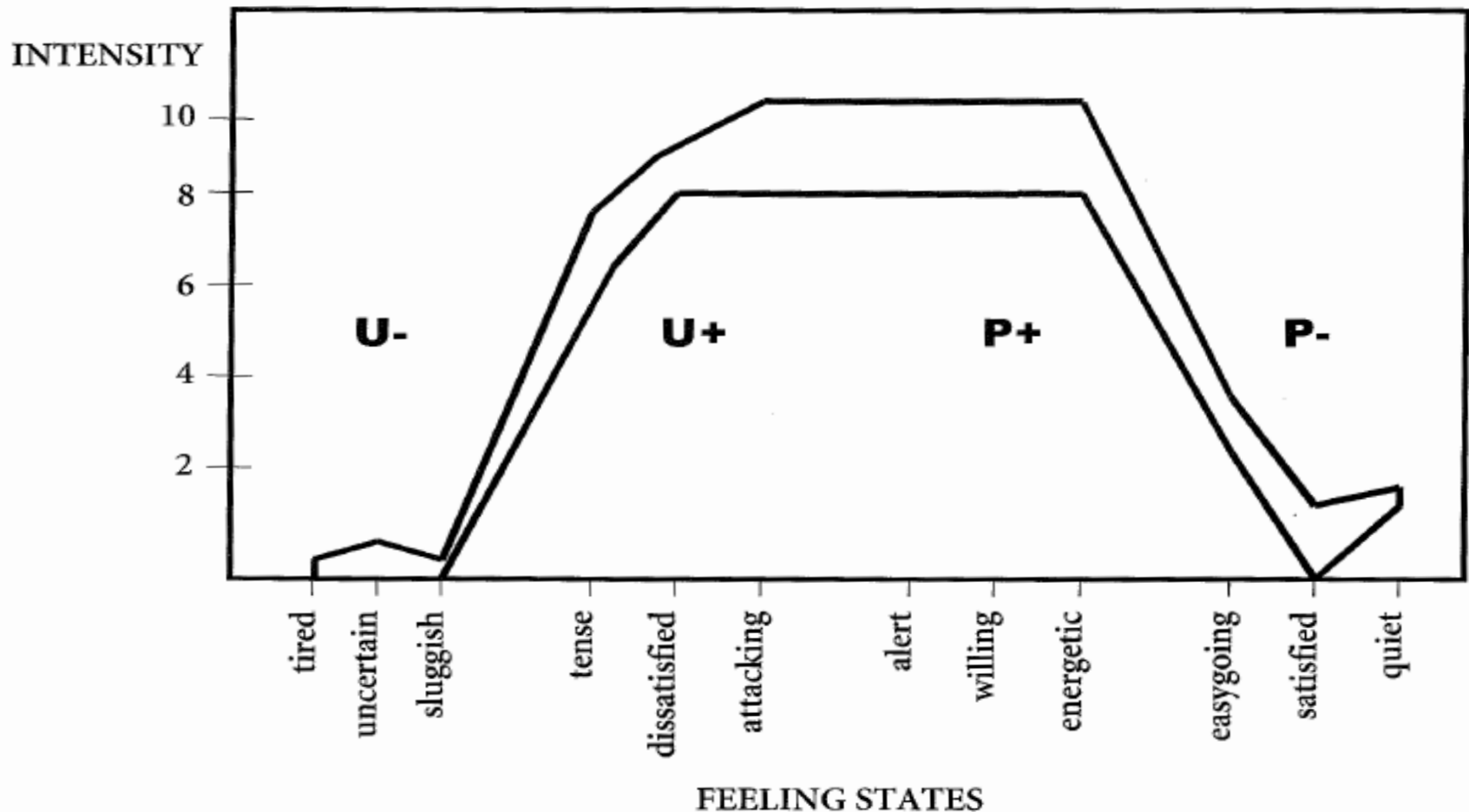


5 Steps to Finding Athlete's IZOF

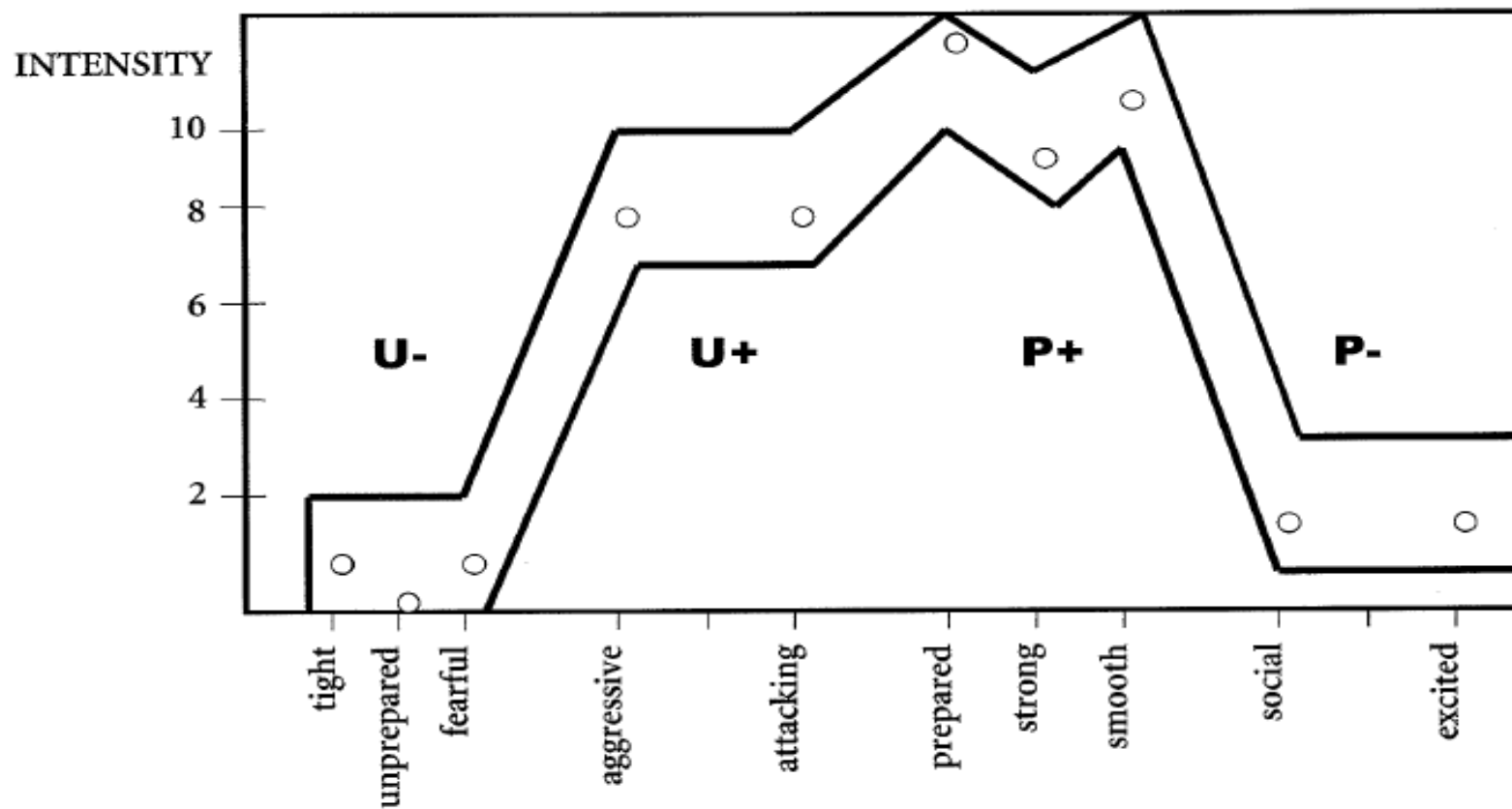
Athlete...

1. Identifies emotions that help performance
2. Identifies emotions that disrupt performance
3. Rate desired level of each emotion
4. Plot emotions and levels on graph
5. Draw 'zone' 1 point above & 1 point below

IZOF – Ice Hockey Player

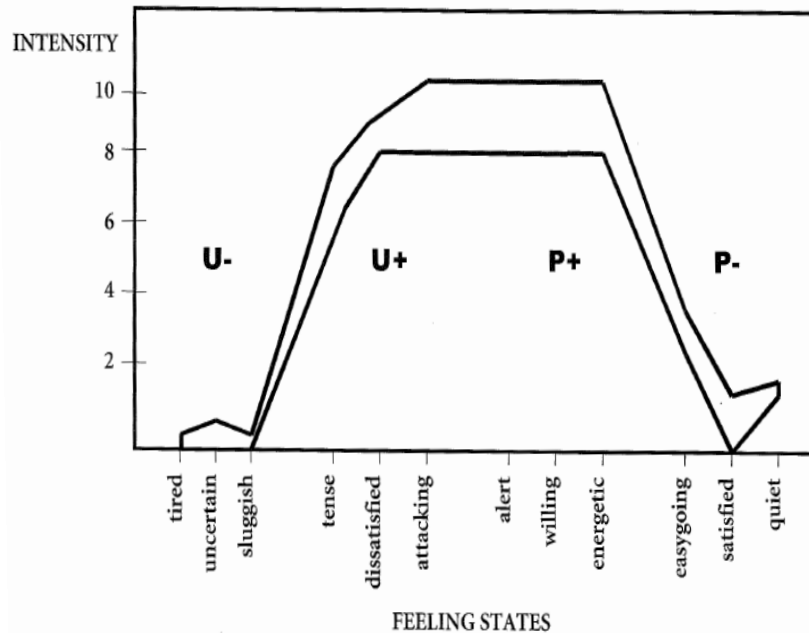


IZOF - Golfer



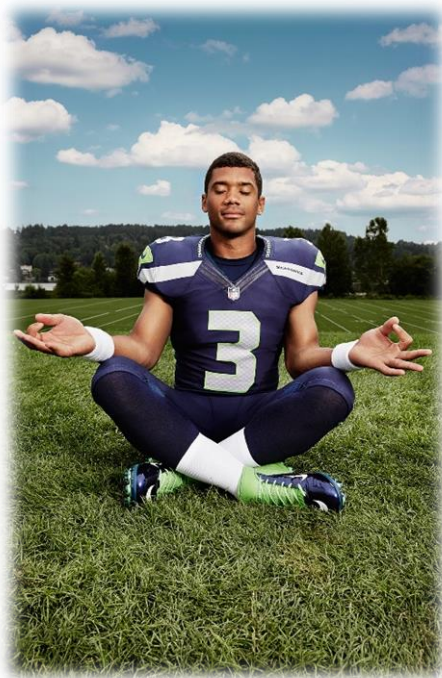
FEELING STATES
Example Optimal Energy Profile for Elite Golfer

The IZOF Iceberg Profile



Coaching Tips: Understanding IZOF

- Range of acceptable 'zones'
- Different athletes = different zones
- Identify emotions that help and hinder

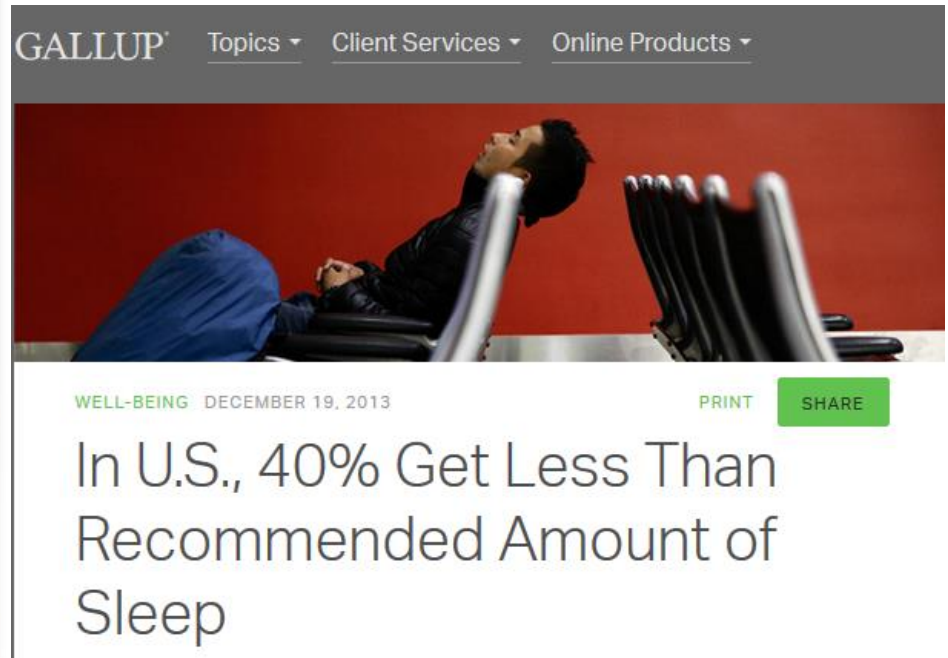


Pre-Game Routines for Athletes

- Sleep guidelines
- Relaxation and 'psyching up' strategies



Sleep Guidelines



The Effects of Sleep Extension on the Athletic Performance of Collegiate Basketball Players

Cheri D. Mah, MS¹; Kenneth E. Mah, MD, MS¹; Eric J. Kezirian, MD, MPH²; William C. Dement, MD, PhD¹

¹Stanford Sleep Disorders Clinic and Research Laboratory, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, School of Medicine, Stanford University, Stanford, CA; ²Department of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery, University of California, San Francisco, CA



6 weeks, at least 9-10 hours sleep per night



- Average sprint times improved 1 second
- Free throw shooting improved 9%
- 3-point field goal shooting improved 9.2%
- Dramatic increases in well-being & energy levels

'Blue Light' Pollution

- 90% use light-emitting electronic device before bed
- Suppresses melatonin production



Evening use of light-emitting eReaders negatively affects sleep, circadian timing, and next-morning alertness

Anne-Marie Chang^{a,b,1,2}, Daniel Aeschbach^{a,b,c}, Jeanne F. Duffy^{a,b}, and Charles A. Czeisler^{a,b}

^aDivision of Sleep and Circadian Disorders, Departments of Medicine and Neurology, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA 02115; ^bDivision of Sleep Medicine, Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA 02115; and ^cInstitute of Aerospace Medicine, German Aerospace Center, 51147 Cologne, Germany



- Longer to fall asleep
- Lower quality sleep
- Reduced alertness next morning
 - Hours longer to fully ‘wake up’
- *Same results for kids who sleep with tv in room*

Sleep Duration, Restfulness, and Screens in the Sleep Environment

Jennifer Falbe, ScD, MPH^a, Kirsten K. Davison, PhD^{a,c}, Rebecca L. Franckle, MPH^{a,c}, Claudia Ganter, MPH^{a,d}, Steven L. Gortmaker, PhD^{a,e}, Lauren Smith, MD, MPH^f, Thomas Land, PhD^g, Elsie M. Taveras, MD, MPH^{a,h}

Coaching Tips: Sleep Guidelines

- ✓ 9-10 hours nightly
- ✓ 1 hour pre-bedtime no e-zone
 - At minimum set light to dimmest setting
- ✓ Dark room (eye-mask if needed)

Relax or 'Psych Up'

Deep belly
breathing

Progressive
muscle
relaxation

Imagery

Music



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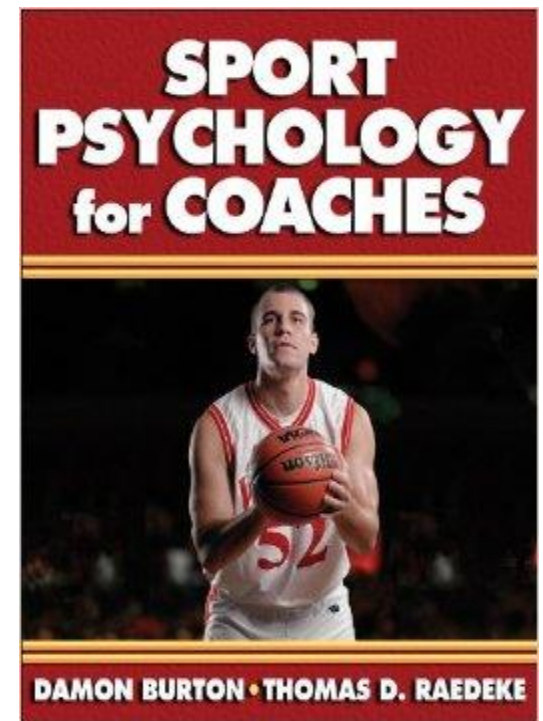
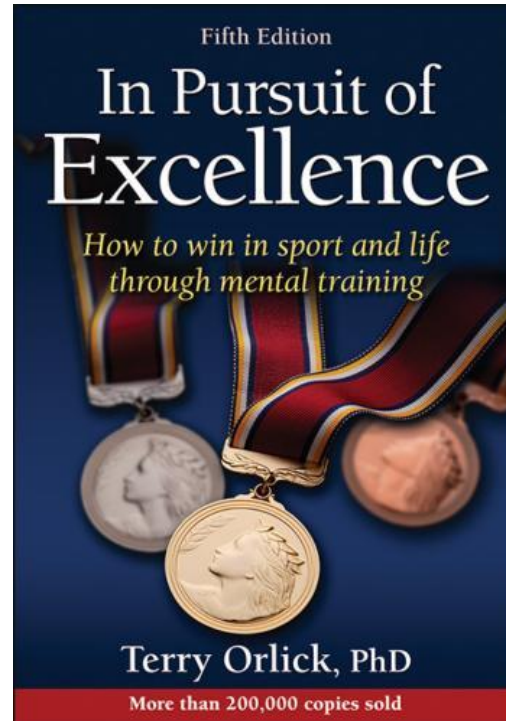
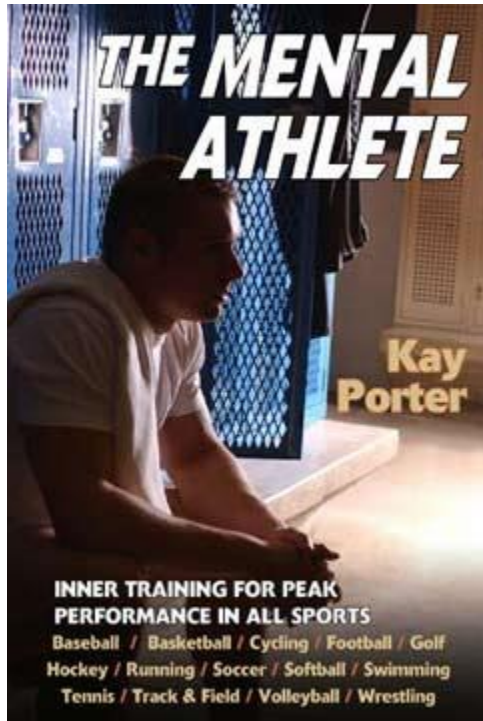
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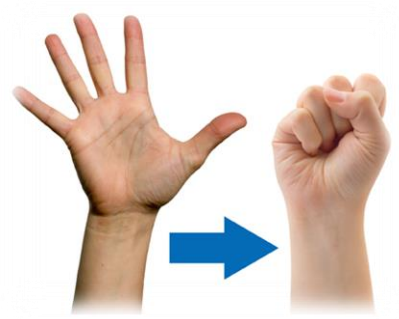
Coaching Resources



Deep Belly (Diaphragmatic) Breathing



- Place one hand on belly, one hand on chest
- Breathe in through nose, 3-5 seconds
- Focus on raising belly, then expand chest
- Hold breathe for 1 second
- Forcefully exhale through mouth (empty lungs)



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Alternate tightening and relaxing different muscle groups
 - *Clench fists and hold for 5-7 seconds, then open fist and relax fingers and hand for 20-30 seconds*
- Isolated body parts or full body



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- [Give Now to Student Affairs & Enrollment Management](#)

► **How to Handle Stress**

► **Books & Internet Resources**

► **Online Relaxation Resources & Audio**

Free Audio Scripts

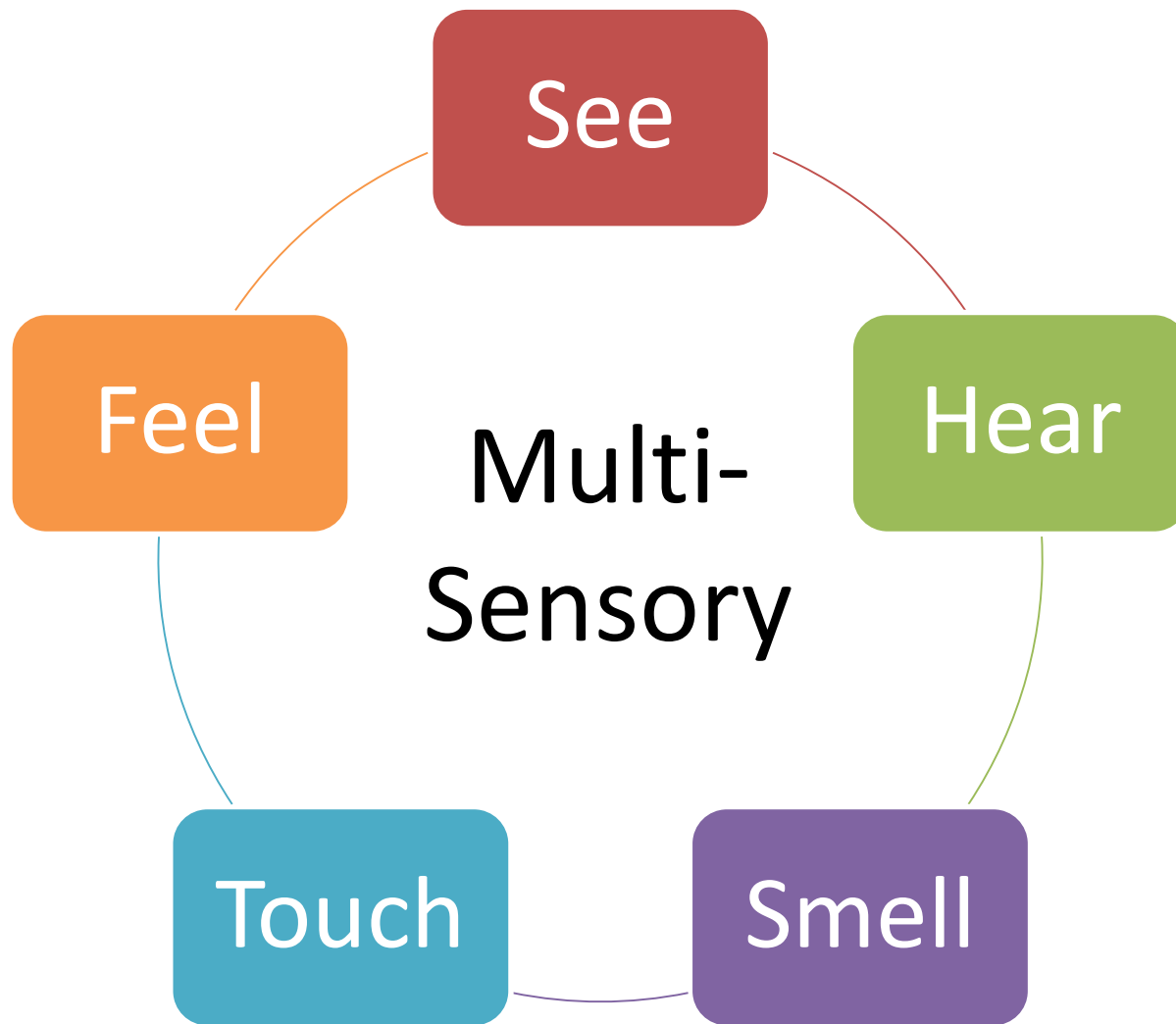
- Diaphragmatic Breathing (9:13)
- Deep Breathing I (6:43)
- Deep Breathing II (7:28)
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (8:39)





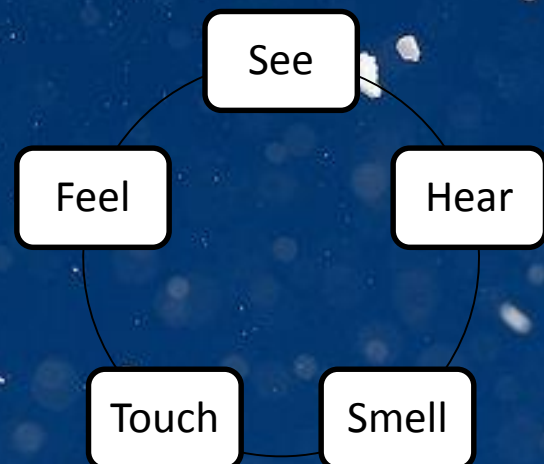
Imagery

- Move from 'thinking about' to 'performing'
- Use deep belly breathing to prepare
- Quiet place (at least when learning)
- Gradually practice in performance conditions
- Key is vividness...





*You have to smell it.
You have to hear it.
You have to feel it,
everything.*



Pre-Game Music



Pre-Game Music

- Shut Up and Dance (Walk the Moon)
- Trap Queen (Fetty Wap)
- Bad Blood (Taylor Swift)
- Honey, I'm Good. (Andy Grammar)
- Want To Want Me (Jason Derulo)
- Worth it (Fifth Harmony Feat. Kid Ink)
- Fight Song (Rachel Platten)
- Watch me (Whip/ Nae Nae)
- Photograph (Ed Sheeran)
- Beautiful Like (Nick Fradiani)
- My House (Flo Rida)
- Renegades (X Ambassadors)
- Dreams (Life of Dillon)

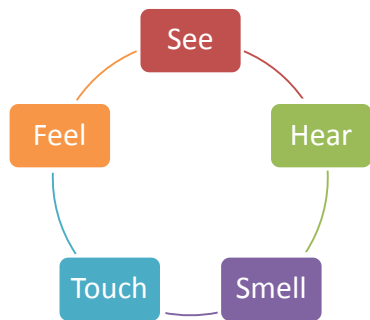




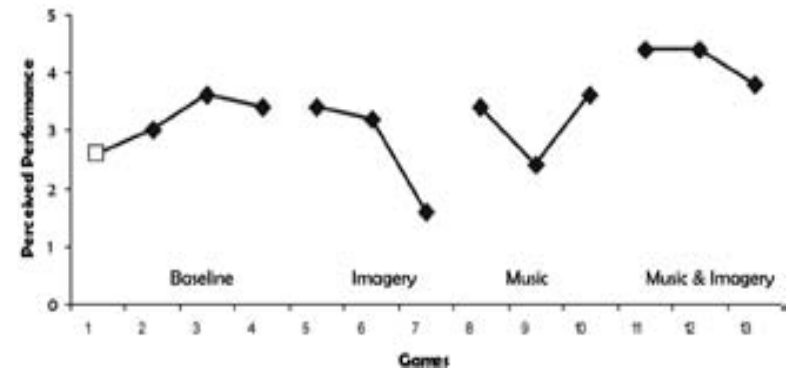
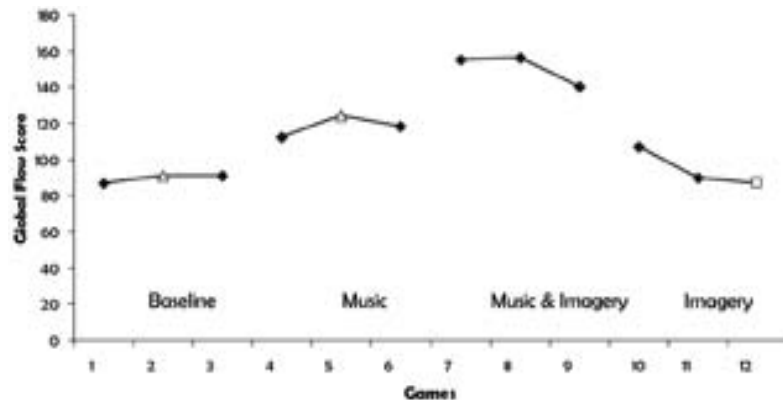
High School Volleyball Athletes' Perceptions of Creating and Using Pre-Competition Warm-Up Music

Jeremy T. YEATS¹ • Michael C. RHOADS²
Mark A. SMITH³ • Lauren O. WHITE³

- Increases motivation to play well
- Helps athletes feel less anxious
- Makes warm-up more fun
- Improves feelings of closeness and cohesion



Imagery + Music

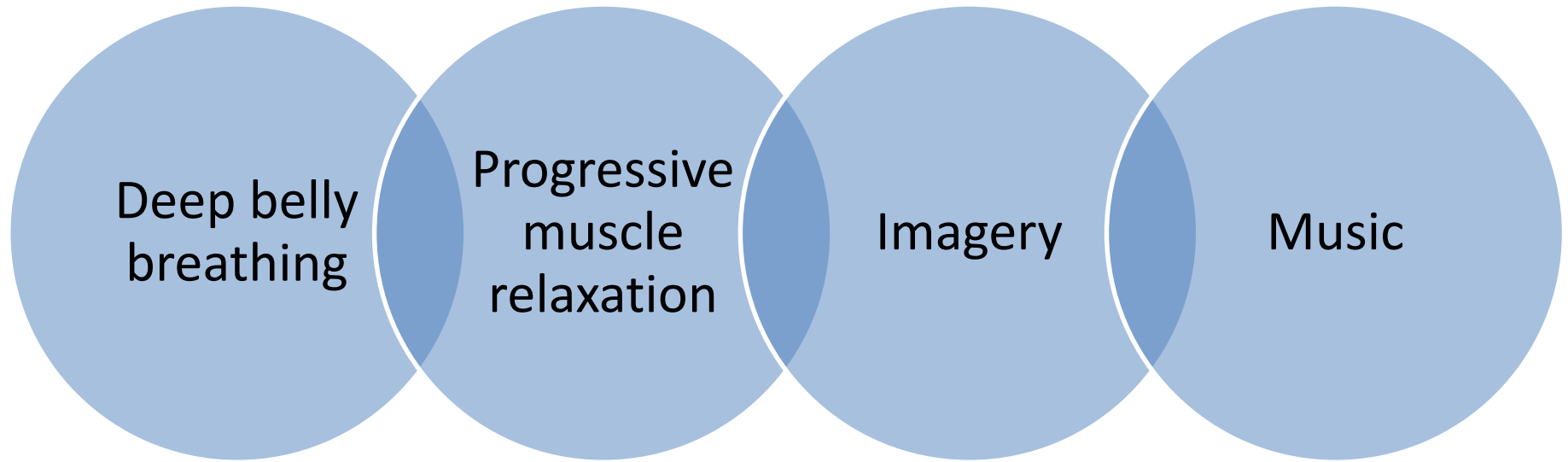


Pain, M. A., Harwood, C., & Anderson, R. (2011). Pre-competition imagery and music: The impact on flow and performance in competitive soccer. *The Sport Psychologist*, 25, 212-232.



I listened to some (music) to pump me up and visualized the floor set I wanted to do. Then I went out and hit the best floor routine of my life.

Coaching Tips: Relax or 'Psych Up'





Pre-Game Message to Athletes



What Approach Works Best?







No Pre-Game Speech?

I prefer thorough preparation over some device to make us 'rise to the occasion.' Let others try to rise suddenly to a higher level than they had attained previously. We would have already attained it in our preparation. We would be there to begin with. A speech by me shouldn't be necessary.



They didn't need some other bugger yelling in their ear. I had been team-talking for 30 years, and I thought it was bloody important, and he [captain] thought it was a bloody waste of time ... He was dead right, and thank God he told me. I could still be doing it!

Hodge, K., Henry, G., & Smith, W. (2014). *The Sport Psychologist*, 28, 60-74.

3 Questions for Coaches

- *When to give the message?*
- *How to give the message?*
- *What is the message?*

When to Give the Message?

- Build momentum in practices and meetings leading up to competition (repeat message)
- Might be best to give day or night before (end of last practice, team dinner)



Time for message to 'sink in'

How to Give the Message?

- Notes to players
 - Personalize, leave in locker day before and/or text message
- Message ‘in action’
 - Stories, videos, guest speakers
- Teammates...

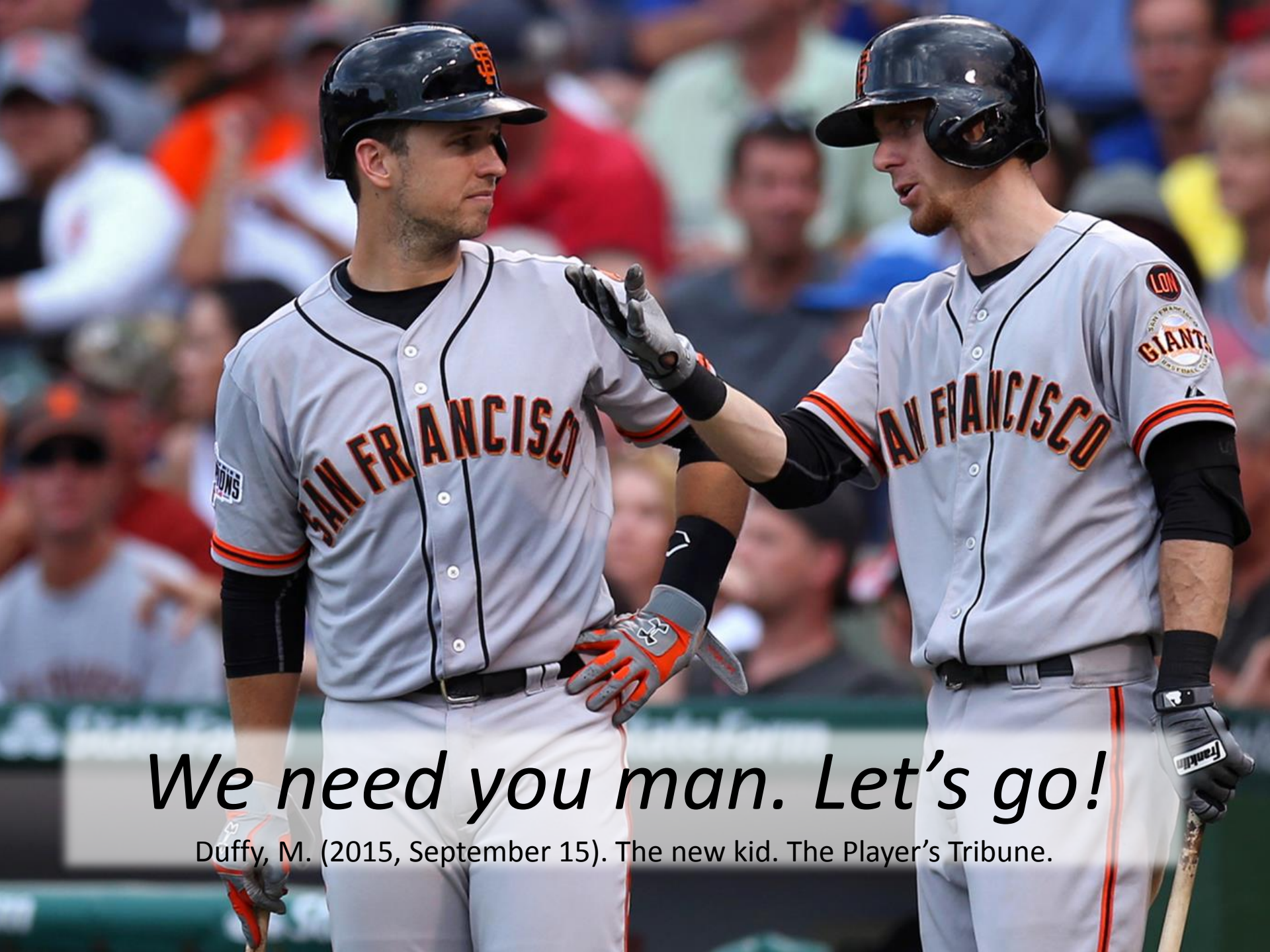


THE GABLE ERA	
1977-1997 (21 YEARS)	
TOTAL RECORD: 355-21-5	
NCAA TEAM TITLES	
IOWA	15
OKLAHOMA ST.	3
IOWA ST.	2
ARIZONA ST.	1
NATIONAL CHAMPS	
IOWA	45
OKLAHOMA ST.	25
IOWA ST.	18
OKLAHOMA	13



- Give each athlete a turn to talk to the team
- Talk in practice leading up to a competition
- Tell team plan of action for winning

He'll talk about the attitude and effort he'll need to succeed.



We need you man. Let's go!

Duffy, M. (2015, September 15). The new kid. The Player's Tribune.

What is the Message?

- ✓ Delivered with genuine emotion appropriate to immediate emotional needs of athletes
- ✓ Reference made to team's core values
- ✓ Short and meaningful

Breakey, C., Jones, M., Cunningham, C. T, & Holt, N. (2009). Female athletes' perceptions of a coach's speeches. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 4, 489-504.

Match the message to the moment



*I didn't give an emotional speech that night ... There was more than enough emotion in the room. **The moment sent the message.***



Coaching Tips: Pre-Competition Message

- Build and repeat message over several days
- Spread message sharing across multiple people
- Show them the message (notes, videos, etc.)
- Let the moment dictate the message

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