



SPORT SCIENCE WORKSHOPS MENTAL SKILLS FOR YOUTH ATHLETES

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Topics for today...

Goal – setting for
increased motivation and
focus



Managing expectations:
both internal and external



Imagery for better
performance



Goal - Setting



Joseph Schooling



“If it wasn’t for Michael, I don’t think I could have gotten to this point. I wanted to be like him as a kid,” Schooling said. “I think a lot of this is because of Michael. He is the reason why I wanted to be a better swimmer.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2016/aug/13/michael-phelps-taught-a-lesson-for-once-by-singapores-joseph-schooling>

Goal-setting Guidelines

S	Goals should be SPECIFIC and address what you plan to do. Include as much detail as possible, such as dates, ranking points, positions, times that you will need to accomplish your goal.
M	They should be MEASURABLE , such that it can be quantified. Establish criteria and milestones along the way to keep track of progress.
A	Goals should be ACHIEVABLE . They should not be too easy to attain or on the other hand, completely out of reach. Goals should be set just outside of your reach but with time and effort you will attain them.
R	They should be RELEVANT in that goals are connected/linked to what you set out to accomplish.
T	Goals should be TIME-BOUND . Set timelines which are realistic yet challenging; a timeframe that will give you a sense of urgency.



NOT SMART vs. SMART

S	Not Specific	I want to be a great swimmer.
	Specific	I want to be ranked no. 1 in Singapore by 2017.
M	Not Measurable	I want to make many good passes in the game.
	Measurable	I want to make 10 successful passes to a team-mate.
A	Not Achievable	I want to score 100 goals in every game.
	Achievable	I want to score at least 1 goal per game.
R	Not Relevant	I want to go to Tokyo Disneyland.
	Relevant	I want to go to Tokyo 2020 Olympics.
T	Not Time-Bound	I want to improve my endurance.
	Time Bound	I want to improve my endurance within 3 months.



Types of goals

PROCESS



Focuses on the specifics of a procedure in which the performer will engage during performance.

PERFORMANCE



Focuses on improvements relative to one's own performance.

OUTCOME



Focuses on the results or some form of standards in reference to somebody else.

PROCESS



- 15 mins of extra sprint training to improve endurance
- Proper execution of kicking technique
- Eat healthily to manage weight





PERFORMANCE →



- Take 5 shots at goal during the match
- Improve beep test results by 2 levels
- Lose 2kg without muscle loss



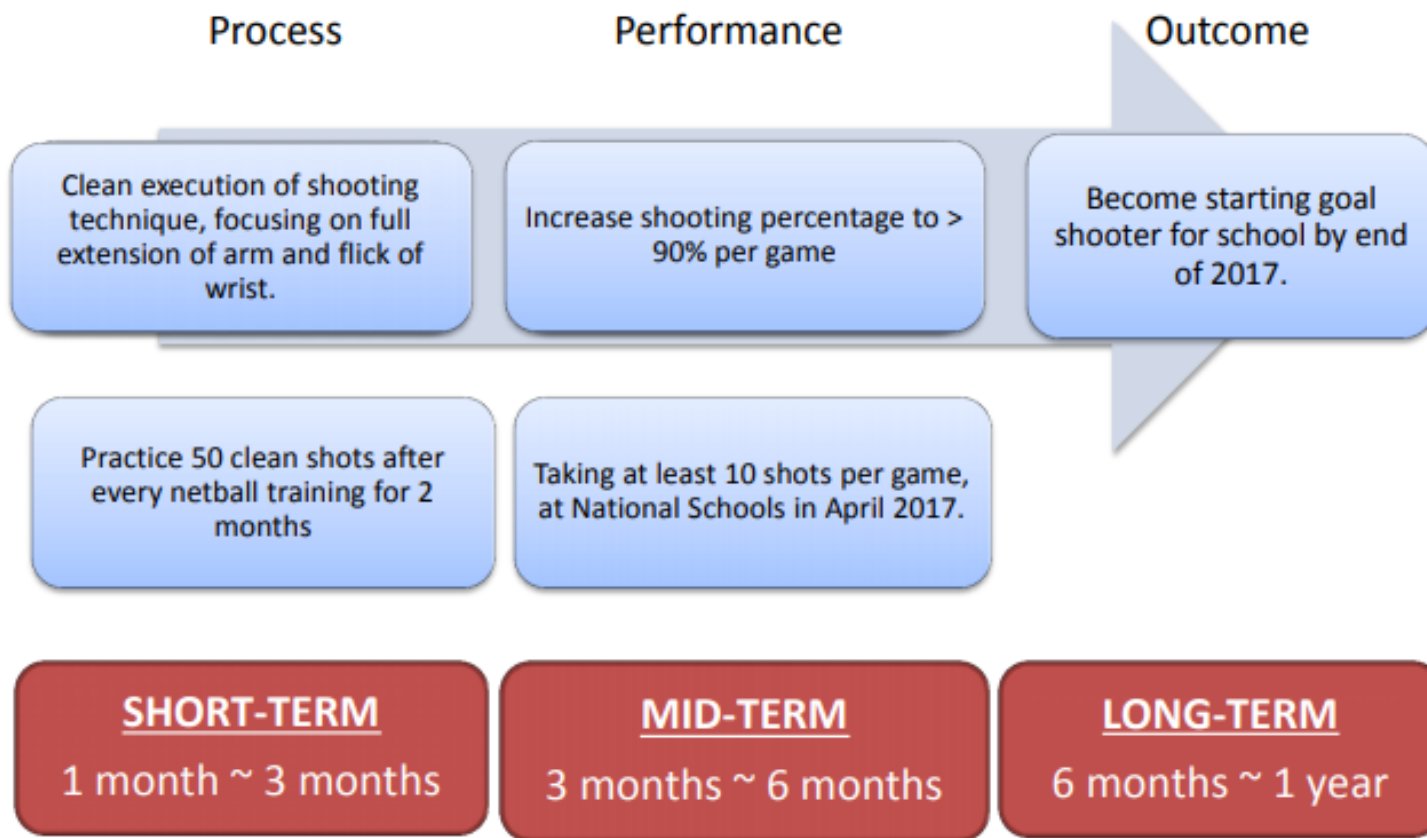
OUTCOME



- Score a goal every game
- Be national age-group 100m champion
- Make national youth team



Trisha, 11 year old netball player, wants to become starting goal shooter for School.



IMPORTANT!!!

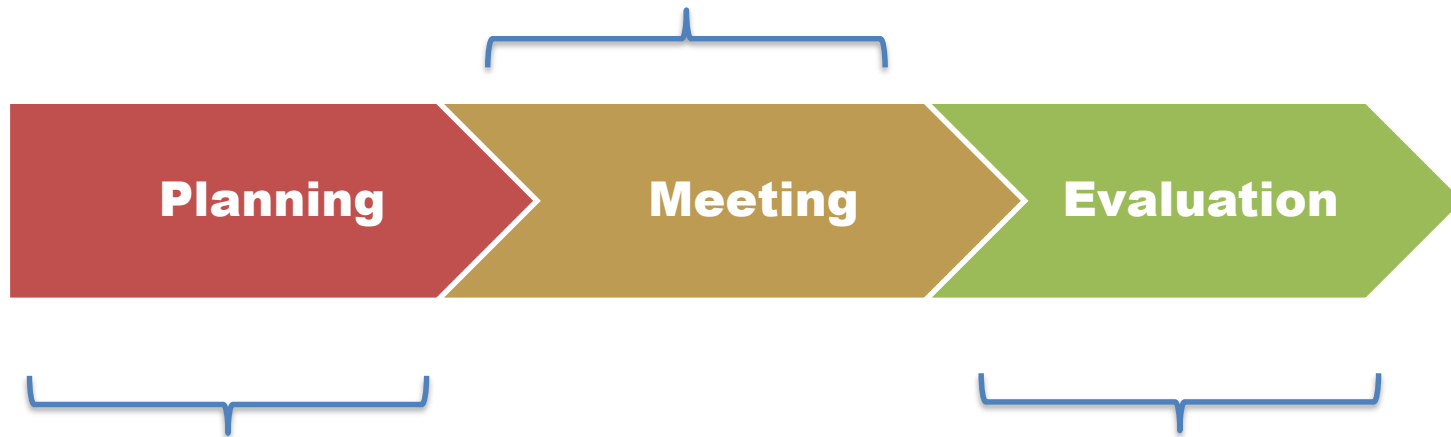
REVIEW



REFLECT

Goal-setting System

- Convey goal setting messages
- Stimulate athlete thinking on goal setting
- Discussion on potential goals
- Seek consensus



- Identify athletes/teams needs
- Identify potential goals
- Consider possible strategies that can assist in goal achievement

- Provide feedback
- Evaluation sessions to monitor

Advice...

Use a combination of
process,
performance, and
outcome goals

Use positive, instead
of negative wording

Move focus away
from outcome goals
as competition
approaches

Athlete ownership of
goals

Identify action
plans/strategies to
achieve goals



A photograph of a baby in a gym setting. The baby is wearing a patterned long-sleeved shirt and a light-colored bib with the text "cute but messy just like dad". The baby is holding a heavy barbell with both hands, standing on a dark, textured gym floor. In the background, there are folding chairs, a table, and some gym equipment like a rowing machine and a weight rack. The word "Managing" is written in white text in the upper left area of the image.

Managing

Expectations



Sources of Expectations

External



Parents

Peers

Coaches

Internal



Self



External



Parents

Peers

Coaches

**Long term
development**

**Task oriented
training environment**

**Process over
outcome**

**Excellence over
success**



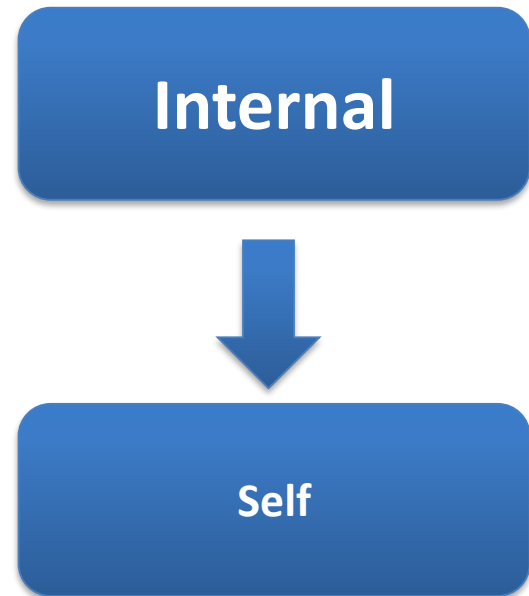
**Know your current
level**

Be realistic

**Failure is an
opportunity to grow**

**Prepare for the worst,
hope for the best**

**Control the
controllables**



Controllables	Uncontrollables
My warm up routine	Officials
My techniques	Judges
My strategy	Competitors
My strengths	Cheering
Preparations (Enough sleep, food, hydration)	Environment
Getting to competition on time	Crowds



How to manage?

Step 1. Identify expectations

Step 2. Challenge unrealistic expectations

Step 3. Replace with more realistic expectations through a focus on the process

Step 4. Ensure external pressures sing the same tune

Advice...

Acknowledge
individual differences

Better understand
your athletes

Build self-awareness
in your athletes

Focus on the fun and
enjoyment



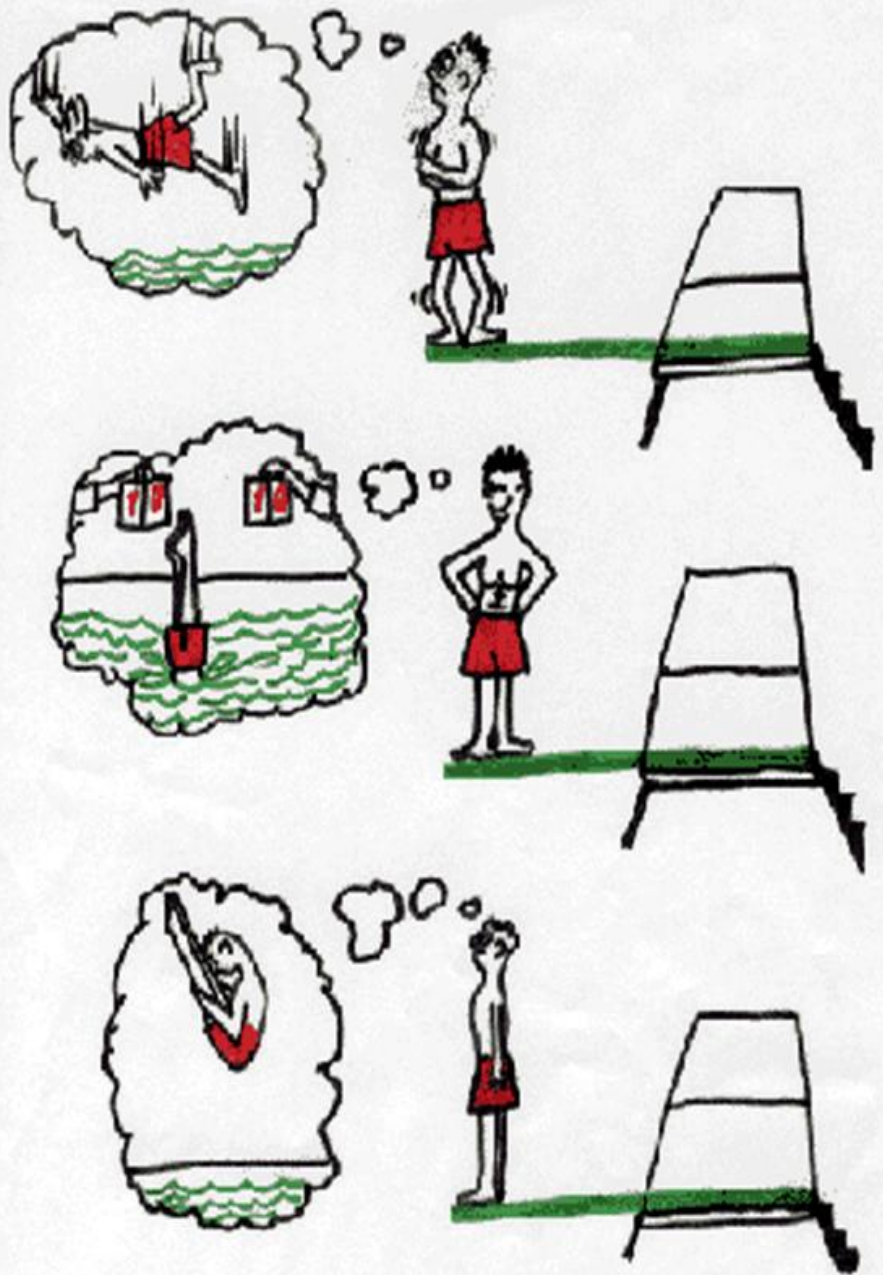
Imagery



Imagery relies on your senses of:

- **Sight**
- **Smell**
- **Taste**
- **Hearing**
- **Touch**
- **Feel*****





Vividness

Controllability

Self-awareness



Imagery Use



Skill Acquisition/motor readiness

- Learn new skills
- Correct mistakes in technique
- Increase neural-muscular activation



Self-confidence

- Recall of good past performances
- Imagine positive outcomes in competition
- Provides mental focus



Relaxation

- Virtual stress-free space
- Decrease general arousal levels

Advice...

Keep it simple

Clearer images give
better outcomes

Frequent practice
builds imagery ability

Imagery should
incorporate all the
senses



Final notes...

- **Mental skills are just like physical/technical skills and require frequent practice**
- **As much as possible, weave the practice of mental skills into training**
- **Bear in mind the holistic long-term development of the youth athlete**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

ANY QUESTIONS???

Contact

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