

Modelling Mental Links to Excellence: MTE-2 for Quality Performance

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Abstract

We developed the Mental Training Exercises (MTE 1 and 2) in response to requests from athletes to provide them with a convenient way to understand, acquire and/or fine-tune their mental skills in order to improve maximally from practice and compete at their best. Our collaborative, deductive procedure involved developing items from our pooled experience from working with high performance athletes. The MTE-2 comprises thirty-five items which provide concrete behavioural representations of five types of mental skills (pre-competition focus, pre-competition distraction control, competition focus, competition distraction control, and post-competition learning) which characterize the approach that top performers bring to quality performance. By modelling important mental skills, and by providing self-rating scales for each, the MTE-2 enables athletes and other performers to assess their own mental skill strengths and deficits relevant to maximizing their competitive performance. Consultations with high performance athletes and other high level performers has confirmed the utility and meaningfulness of the MTE-2. Preliminary evidence of criterion validity has also been shown. This article illustrates practical ways for consultants to use the MTE-2. A complete copy of the standard MTE-2 is provided.

Introduction

The Mental Training Exercise for Quality Performance (MTE-2) is a set of thirty five questions designed to guide athletes and others toward enhanced **performance**. Our previously described MTE-1 for Quality Practice provides a set of questions representing prerequisite orientations and mental skills for high quality **practising** (Partington and Orlick, 1998). We believe that the MTE-2 is equally important to model how to prepare for and deal with the challenges and pressure of actual competition and/or public performance.

Our research and consulting experiences have vividly identified important links

between level of performance achievement and certain key mental skills and perspectives (e.g., Orlick and Partington, 1986, 1988; Orlick, 1998; Partington, 1996). Through the highly specific questions in the MTE-2 we share these key prerequisites or mental links to excellence in such a way as to benefit a wide range of potential users, especially athletes/performers, and coaches/teachers. Each of these questions draws attention to a prerequisite orientation or mental skill for attaining and sustaining ongoing performance excellence. We know how frustrated and disappointed athletes can feel after they “lose it” in a key moment before or during a performance especially after months or years of dedicated work. Many

serious athletes wonder about the kind of mental skills that truly great performers bring to their game. Some have directly asked us how their own mental skills and perspectives compare with the “great ones” who seem to stay on track through the ups and downs, even in clutch situations. Perhaps there is no single “success blueprint” or simple formula that guarantees success; however we do know from our experiences with great performers that they bring a distinct set of mental skills and perspectives to their pursuit.

In this article we describe the MTE-2, and outline why and how it can provide you and other users with an effective guide to help you achieve a higher quality of performance and higher levels of consistency, particularly when performing under pressure.

Positive Experience With the First Draft

Since the MTE-1 proved to be reliable and valid in practical settings (Partington and Orlick, 1998), we used the same test construction process with the MTE-2. We wrote thirty five concrete mental skill items to represent what top athletes do to attain quality and consistency in their pre-competition focus, pre-competition distraction control, focus during competition, distraction control during competition, as well as how they draw out and act on lessons from each competition. In our first draft of the MTE-2 we provided a four point rating scale for each item (i.e., 0 - “never”, 1 - “seldom”, 2 - “usually”, and 3 - “always”) to enable the respondent to report the consistency with which she/he uses each of the mental skills immediately before, during and after competitions. We also included several open-ended questions of the “what do you do” type. This was to ensure that each user would clearly reflect upon and identify their current strategies, and perhaps discuss and

compare strategies with team mates and others.

We gave this draft of the MTE-2 to forty six athletes who were consulting with us at that time. We learned that these athletes’ self-ratings on the MTE-2 helped them to pinpoint areas for discussion and target areas for improvement through mental training. These athletes were interested in the content of the MTE and seemed to enjoy reviewing their self-ratings during one-on-one consulting sessions. In many cases, they spoke about their mental skills objectively, almost as if they were viewing their mental skills ratings as an outside observer who was looking at their strengths and identifying areas where they could benefit from improvement. The athletes appreciated the opportunity to become more aware of the overall scope of mental skills training, their own mental strengths, and where they needed work. They also suggested some improvements for the MTE-2 which included revised wording for a few items, and the provision of a more graduated response scale to enable them to make finer discriminations for assessing their mental skills. Hence, we revised the MTE-2 by clarifying or simplifying the wording of some items, and by providing an eleven-point response scale (i.e., “never do this” - 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100 - “always do this”). The complete revised MTE-2 is presented at the end of this article.

Validity

As was the case with the development of the MTE-1, our goal with the MTE-2 was to create an immediate means for modelling relevant mental skills, and for providing a clear and simple self-assessment process to help a growing number of athlete/clients determine how to best direct their mental training efforts.

At this point we are able to provide a preliminary demonstration of MTE-2 criterion validity. The reasoning which guides this demonstration is as follows: If mental readiness is a state which distinguishes between athletes/performers of different levels (Orlick and Partington, 1988; Orlick, 1997), then we would expect noticeable differences in self-reported mental skill levels on the MTE-2 between world champion, national team, and university varsity level athletes. We did find these differences in comparisons between athletes which we had available for this assessment of MTE-2 validity. To represent the world champion level we used MTE-2 scores from a currently competing elite level rower who had won an Olympic silver medal, followed by two consecutive World Championships. For the National athlete level we used the scores of fourteen athletes representing alpine skiing, basketball and equestrian, none of whom had yet distinguished themselves at the international level. Finally, the university level athlete was represented by twenty six varsity players from a variety of different team and individual sports (including football, basketball, soccer, hockey, fencing, running and gymnastics).

Table 1 shows expected differences in support of the criterion validity of the MTE-2. First, in the left-hand column observe the very high raw scores of our elite athlete on each of the thirty five items. This demonstrates the link between high competitive achievement and well developed, highly consistent mental skills. Though the scores for this elite athlete are dramatically strong, they are not surprising to us given the fact that each of the items on the MTE-2 emerged from reports of mental skills used consistently by other great athletes; the items represent how they focus to achieve success. Next, compare those high raw scores against the lower mean item scores

representing athletes at the national and university levels. Also note that the national level mean scores are slightly higher than those of the varsity athletes on all but one of the thirty five mental skills. Finally, to demonstrate the practical significance of these differences, we presented, for each of the thirty five mental skill items the proportion of athletes in the national and university groups who definitely needed work on each skill, as reflected by an item score of “70” or below. The third and fourth columns in the table show these relative proportions. As expected for athletes at these levels, a higher proportion of university athletes needed work on most of these mental skills; but more importantly using the criteria of 70 or below, many athletes at both levels needed work on a variety of the thirty five mental skills which are modelled in the MTE-2. In summary, the MTE-2 items represent mental skills which, based on self-report ratings, serve to distinguish between athletes of various achievement levels. That is, the MTE-2 appears to model and measure what it was designed to do.

User Feedback on the Utility of the MTE-1 and MTE-2

Each of us, as well as a few of our advanced practicum students, has been using the Mental Training Exercises extensively over the past seven years with athletes, performers, and others interested in self improvement. We now believe from these experiences that anyone who is committed to specifically targeted personal/performance improvement can benefit from using the MTE 1 and 2. Our conclusion about the utility of these mental training exercises has been strengthened by positive user feedback as reflected in the following typical comments.

Table 1. Evidence in Support of MTE-2 Criterion Validity

Individual Items	Item Scores			% Need Work	
	Elite	Nat'l	Univ	Nat'l	Univ
<u>Precompetition Focus</u>					
1. Lead up time - get lots of rest	100	89	76	7	46
2. Lead up time - know what focus work best	100	81	76	29	50
3. Success at attaining this focus	100	79	76	36	38
4. Success at maintaining this focus	100	81	70	29	62
5. Just before competing - know best focus	100	81	60	21	65
6. Success at attaining this best focus	100	82	69	21	62
<u>Distraction Control</u>					
Refocusing success before event when worrying about:					
7. - not being ready	100	74	68	46	54
8. - losing	100	77	72	45	24
9. - getting hurt/being injured	100	78	84	31	24
10. - teammates	100	85	74	18	43
11. - officials and judges	100	83	76	30	50
12. - family and friends	100	77	75	36	42
13. - media	100	81	81	10	35
14. - coaches comments/behaviour	100	83	64	27	71
15. - refocusing between events - know how	100	77	75	29	50
16. - refocusing between event - success at doing it	100	76	70	50	69
COMPETITION					
<u>Focus at competition site</u>					
17. Remind self of strengths	NA*	83	75	21	35
18. Look for advantages/opportunities	100	79	72	43	58
19. Find reasons to believe in self	NA*	79	74	36	50
20. Leave outside concerns behind	100	89	78	14	35
21. Know best performance focus	100	85	67	15	62
22. Success at maintaining best focus	90	76	70	43	65
<u>Distraction Control During Competition</u>					
Refocusing Success when faced with the following situations:					
23. - making an error	80	80	59	29	85
	NA**		67	50	52

Table 1. (Continued)

Individual Items	Item Scores			% Need Work	
	Elite	Nat'l	Univ	Nat'l	Univ
24.- poor officiating	NA**	77	67	50	52
25. - opponents great performance	100	74	67	57	64
26. - not feeling 100%	90	74	59	36	85
27. - negative thoughts	100	76	55	43	88
28. - coaches comments/behaviour	NA***	79	60	38	67
29. - difficult environmental conditions	90	82	75	23	46
30. - change in momentum	80	75	69	45	68
31. - being evaluated	100	76	63	42	71
32. - thinking about outcome	90	73	72	67	60
POST COMPETITION					
<u>Learning and Refocusing</u>					
33. Success at drawing out lessons	90	78	68	23	64
34. Success at acting on lessons	90	76	66	38	77
35. Leave things that didn't go well behind - refocus	80	69	60	54	73

* “Don’t feel the need to do it at this point - have already done it pre-competition”					
**NA (not applicable) “Not an issue for me in rowing”.					
*** “We are on our own for 30 minutes before the race for our on-water warm-up, then we race”.					

Encourages thoughtful objective responding

- “I really enjoyed taking the time to carefully think through my answers for the MTE. The exercise made me reflect on a lot of different things about my sport, as well as the way I think and deal with certain situations. I have learned a lot about myself, and what enables me to practice and perform at a higher level”.
- “The questions were very thorough when asking about practice and competition situations. Due to this, I had no choice but to really think about the answers. Because of this I know that my answers were accurate, and I felt no need to change them a few days later when thinking in retrospect. By reviewing the questionnaires when they had been completed, I was able to identify my target areas. I simply went through all my answers and picked out the ones which had low scores. Also, by reviewing (my answers) I was not only able to think of some changes to be made, but I could see them on paper. They seemed more real to me that way”.

Adaptable to different areas of performance

- “We all strive for different goals in life. Mine was to become more organized and have a more balanced day, week and life. Due to the nature of my self-growth area many of the MTE questions had to be adapted to my own objective. The MTE provided a helpful breakdown of mental states and self-growth strategies. My self-growth experience has supplied me with a number of strategies and mental skills that I can apply throughout the rest of my life in hopes of coming closer to my goals.

With persistence, drive and determination I know I can get there”.

Identifies strengths & weaknesses

- “The MTE-2 was of value in identifying a relevant target area to work. After I completed the MTE, I went through and noticed that two areas had very low ratings - which I agree with.
- “Excellent tool to use as an indicator of my strengths and weaknesses. The MTE-2 was definitely of value in identifying relevant target areas to work on. Not only did I find out what I needed to work on more, I also developed some confidence by knowing that I had many strengths as well”.

Provides targets for change and shows how to fix

- “It was obvious that both the MTE 1 and MTE 2 were able to identify a relevant target area to work on which indicated to me how I could fix it. In the MTE 2, I was able to realize that I was entering exams stressed, I got distracted during exams and wasn’t able to get back on track and I wasn’t learning from mistakes after an exam. I have benefited tremendously from the MTE because it centered me in on what I needed to do to become a better student”.
- “I feel that these (MTE exercises) really set out workable mental strategies and plans to achieve your goal. There are also examples of how to execute them and fully understand what I need as a person to achieve my goal. The other good thing is that I am able to zero in on certain things that hinder my performance and try and change them”.

Builds confidence and guides learning

- “The MTE indicated my strengths as well as my weaknesses. I discovered I was very efficient at focusing. I was pleased to find one thing I was doing properly. I have always had the ability to set my mind to something and to remain focused for long periods of time. The MTE also indicated I was not drawing out lessons. This will be a technique I will use in the future. By drawing out lessons I will be able to recognize good qualities and poor qualities of a performance and I will be able to bring this knowledge to the next experience”.
- “Before starting this project with the MTE I did not realize that I could really progress in the sport of ringette by using mental skills. I had never used them before because I did not understand how to or what the benefits could be. When I tried it, it really worked. I improved in most areas on the MTE. This helped me in game situations. Most of all, doing the project helped me realize how to build up my self-esteem. I often do not think I am as good as the others and do not want to make a mistake, so I do not even try. This MTE self-growth project helped me achieve a goal that I otherwise would not have thought possible”.

Stimulates positive change

- “Before completing the MTE exercises I was not serious in committing myself to cross-country running or interested in getting any particular goal for me to achieve. But I was strongly interested in becoming an outstanding performer - which meant I had to become more committed and set specific goals to

achieve my dream goal. I have now learned how to get into happy moods before running and to focus better when I become distracted during running.

- “It felt great to fill out the MTEs again after using my plan for over a month. I improved in all the areas that concerned focusing and refocusing. I think I was very effective in promoting positive growth in an area that was important to me. I can now get right back on track after any type of distraction (in the game). I do not let anything worry me concerning hockey. I have learned not to spend my time worrying about things that are out of my control, such as officials' calls. I rarely doubt my abilities anymore. I am always reminding myself of my strengths and look for advantages in any situation I am put in”.
- “My self-growth plan (more balance in life) has already significantly changed my life for the better. I feel less rushed, more balanced and in control”.

Consultant Guidelines

In this section, I (Terry) briefly share three different contexts within which I have used the MTE in my work with athletes, students and other performers. The first context is within ongoing one-on-one consulting situations, the second is to facilitate self-directed learning in large classes, and the third is for guiding the pursuit of excellence with large groups of performers. First, however, let me explain how I introduce the MTE.

When introducing the MTE to individual athletes or large groups of students/performers, I emphasize that every item (every question) presented in this self assessment exercise represents a

perspective, skill or action that the world's best performers feel are very important or very helpful in achieving their high level goals. I emphasize that it is important to be totally honest with yourself in responding to each of these MTE questions, if the exercise is to be of real value. I find this reminder is more important when working with large groups of respondents than when using it in ongoing one-on-one consulting situations. I also point out that truly great performers I have worked with consistently rate themselves very high on virtually every item on the MTE-1 and MTE-2. There may be one or two questions that they do not find particularly applicable to their situation but most questions are highly applicable and receive very high ratings (mostly 100's and 90's). It is also interesting to note that even the world's best athletes have some room for improvement. For example, the elite athlete ratings presented in this article show three scores of 80 on the 35 questions which make up the MTE-2. With work, the skills representing these three "lower" scores could be improved.

One-on-one consulting with the MTE

My experience has confirmed that when consulting one-on-one with high performance athletes, most of them can quickly identify where they need work to enhance the quality or consistency of their performance. When consulting with many athletes at this higher level, within a one-on-one context, they may not need the MTE. I can just sit down and talk with them, ask relevant questions about what they feel they need to work on, listen attentively, and work together to make these improvements.

However, the MTE can be most beneficial in one-on-one consulting situations when it: 1) provides the consultant or performer with a practical and relevant structure for what they are doing or

attempting to do, 2) gives the consultant or the performer a clearer understanding of what mental skills or perspectives are important, 3) identifies important individual strengths as well as specific areas for improvement, and 4) gives performers a way of comparing their mental skills with the best.

Another advantage of the MTE is that a performer can identify a relevant target area for improvement, set a plan to improve, act on the plan and then go back and re-rate himself or herself on that item. This can help the performer and the consultant assess progress. An example of this occurred when a basketball player I was consulting with identified competition distraction control (question 28 - coaches comments) as an area that needed work, because it was interfering with his game focus. He rated his skill at doing this consistently as 40 out of 100. Together, we developed a refocusing plan to deal with this specific item, so that he could shift focus away from the coach and get back to executing his game plan. He worked on this skill for three weeks. When he returned I asked him to re-rate that same question on the MTE-2. He rated it as 85. He commented, "My performance really got better by practising that simple shift in focus, every day".

When I use the MTE, I almost always use **both** the MTE-1 for Quality Practice and the MTE-2 for Quality Performance, as I feel both are extremely important in achieving performance excellence. It takes about an hour to complete both forms, about 30 minutes each. In one-on-one consulting situations I will give the MTE to an athlete/performer only if I feel his or her commitment to developing the mental game is strong, or if I feel he or she really wants to make improvements. In

this case I tell them a little about what the MTE is, what it is designed to do and how long it takes to complete. Then I tell them they can decide whether or not they want to do it. If they choose to do it, they usually take it home, fill it out, and bring it back the following session.

Once the MTE is completed I like to read through it thoroughly before meeting with the athlete/performer. I look for strengths (items that have the highest scores) and look for areas that seem to need most improvement (lowest scores). I often jot down a few comments on the MTE next to responses that jump out at me (e.g., “This is a great strength” “This could probably benefit from improvement”). I also look closely at what the performer writes down in response to open-ended questions (e.g., what is your best competition focus). Before our meeting I photocopy the MTE so that we can each have a copy in front of us. I begin by pointing out strengths. We then identify areas that might benefit from additional work. Together we decide on what is most important right now and develop a little plan to make those improvements. We also discuss some of the open-ended responses which reflect strengths and areas to improve, to get more detail on what works best and what interferes with best performances. For additional comments on how we have used the MTE, see Partington & Orlick (1998, pp. 84-87).

One reason I feel comfortable giving the MTE to committed athletes/performers is that the personal feedback I have received from these people has been very positive. Many elite athletes have reinforced the belief that everything that is really important for performance excellence is in MTE and that it is a great reminder of what they have to do to perform to their capacity.

Large group work with the MTE

When using the MTE-2 with groups of performers I emphasize the fact that from a mental training perspective, competition actually involves three phases - pre-competition, competition, and post-competition. Each of these phases demands particular mental skills and practices in order to focus, deal with distractions, and to get both maximum performance and maximum benefits from the experience. I then ask the group the following question “Are your thoughts and focus working for you or against you during those times”? The MTE-2 is designed to help you get your thoughts and focus working for you more consistently, in the same way that great performers do.

The first large group context within which I used the MTE with great success was a large university class (140 students) most of whom were athletes or performers in other disciplines. The content focus of this class was applied sport psychology - mental training and excellence. The format for learning included applied presentations, discussions, and readings, but most important was the opportunity for students to carry out a self growth project aimed at making a positive change in their own performance or their own life.

Early in the course students were asked to:

- Pick a sport, performance or life domain to which they are committed, and within which they would like to improve in some way, for example in sport, dance, music, academics, work, relationships, health, fitness or balanced living.

- Complete relevant questions on the MTE 1 and MTE 2 keeping this domain in mind.
- Read over their responses on each of the items in the MTE 1 and MTE 2 and select a focus area to work on that they think will help them come closer to reaching goals or living their potential.
- Complete the self-directed interview in *In Pursuit of Excellence* (1990, page 46) keeping this focus area in mind.
- Write down a plan to make those improvements. Draw upon their own experiences, as well as relevant strategies or planning forms in *Embracing Your Potential* (1998), *In Pursuit of Excellence* (1990), *Psyching for Sport* (1986), or other relevant material.
- Act on the plan by applying the strategies selected, assess and revise the plan based on lessons from personal experiences (over a period of 8-10 weeks).
- Go through the MTE again and re-rate themselves to indicate where they are now on each relevant item.

Over the duration of this course various strategies for self-directed growth were discussed and practical readings were provided. However, no **individual** feedback was provided on the MTE or the self-directed change process. At the end of this project all participants reported meaningful improvement in the mental skill area(s) selected, and in their overall performance. They also indicated that the MTE had been a

very helpful guide for making those improvements.

Another initiative where I found the MTE to be valuable in a group context was with a group of 122 of the best young performers (aged 18-22) involved in a variety of different technical trades (e.g., cabinet making, automechanics, brick laying, culinary arts, hair dressing, jewellery making, plumbing, and 33 other trades). Most of these performers were either enrolled in technical schools or were working as apprentices with experts in their specific trade. These 122 performers were selected from across the country to compete in a National Trades Competition which would also serve as a selection competition for a four day International Trades Competition. One competitor per trade, per country, would compete in this international event involving approximately 33 countries.

One year before the international competition and 7 months before the selection competition, the entire group of performers was brought together for a 1½ day workshop which focused exclusively on mental preparation for quality practice and quality performance. During this workshop each performer completed the MTE-1 and MTE-2. The questionnaires were collected at that time and later carefully reviewed and returned to each performer by mail. The wording on some of the MTE items was altered to include “trade or skill area” in place of sport or performance domain.

For most of this group the whole idea of mental training was new and few had relevant competitive experiences to draw upon in developing or refining their own competition plans. It would have been an advantage to have an opportunity for individual one-on-one contact to review each participants' MTEs and develop action

plans together, however, this was not possible given the context of the situation. Instead, I took the following three steps: first, I carefully reviewed each participants response for each item on the MTE 1 and MTE 2 - in order to identify and point out any strengths reflected on the questionnaire; next, I identified areas which, if improved, could enhance the overall quality or consistency of their performance; finally, I suggested a simple way to make an improvement (e.g., “develop a little refocusing plan so that you are prepared to deal with this distraction in the competition and practice it”).

It took me about 15 minutes to go through one performer’s responses on the MTE-1 and another 15 minutes to review their MTE-2, giving this kind of constructive feedback and making a positive summary statement at the end. I felt it was important to give specific individual feedback, and to include encouraging comments on each person’s questionnaire to help these performers continue to move along towards their personal potential.

In that these participants were spread out across a very large country and did not have resource materials readily available to read (e.g., applied sport psychology or mental training books), we decided that some short, concise information that addressed each content area on the MTE would be of value. Thus, I provided participants with about a half a page of written material on each MTE subscale (e.g., pre competition focus, pre-competition distraction control, competition focus, competition distraction control, post competition learning). I also gave them a Binder/workbook briefly outlining how to develop a competition plan and refocusing plan, which included some simple Planning forms.

For those who wanted additional readings or examples of real plans from high level performers, I referred them to my web site www.zoneofexcellence.com. All they had to do was click on “Free Articles”. They were also given my E-mail address in case they had any questions or comments. It was clear from my interaction with these participants that some were highly committed and highly capable of self directed learning and others were not. Some participants had no idea of how to make the improvements that were identified on their MTE. This additional resource information and the opportunity for individual contact over the Internet was necessary to make the desired improvements within the time frames they were facing.

As this article goes to print we are still engaged in consulting work with this team. To date, the MTE has helped to provide these performers with a clearer understanding of the practical mental skills linked to excellence and has targeted strengths as well as specific areas for improvement. We will solicit individual feedback from all participants at the conclusion of this project and hopefully grow from their experiences and input.

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MTE-2 - Mental Training Exercise for Quality Performance

The following questions are designed to help you to understand and strengthen your pre-competition focus and competition focus. The items are based on what top performers do to perform at a consistently high level of excellence. Answer the questions with reference to the sport or performance domain to which you are most committed at the present time.

I. PRE-COMPETITION FOCUS

1. During the lead-up time to major competitions it is important to be well rested. Do you give yourself the best chance of achieving your goals by getting lots of rest so you feel energized and ready to go?

never always
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

2. During the lead-up days or hours before your competition, it is important to think and act in ways that allow you to feel positive and ready to perform. Do you know what works best for you?

never always
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

- A) What do you do and/or think about that helps you to feel positive during this lead-up time?

3. Are you successful at getting into your positive ready state during this lead-up time?

never always
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

4. Once you are into this state, are you successful at maintaining it?

never always
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

5. It is important to do and/or think about things that allow you to feel positive, focused, and ready to perform **immediately before competing** (the last 30 seconds). Do you know what works best for you?

don't know Know exactly
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

A) What do you do and/or think about that helps you feel positive and focused **immediately before competing** (last 30 seconds)?

6. Are you successful at getting into this positive ready state immediately before competing?

never always
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

II. PRE COMPETITION - DISTRACTION CONTROL

Before your event starts there are a number of things that can distract you or take you away from your best focus. For each of the possible distractions below, how successful are you at refocusing and getting back into your positive ready state?

7. When worrying about not being ready:

problem Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

8. When worrying about losing:

problem Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

9. When worrying about getting hurt/being injured

problem Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

10. When worrying about teammates:

problem Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

11. When worrying about officials and judges:

problem _____ Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

12. When worrying about friends/family:

problem _____ Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

13. When worrying about the media:

problem _____ Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

14. When worrying about coach’s comments or behaviour:

problem _____ Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

- Identify and rate other distractors:

Distractor #1 is: _____

problem _____ Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

Distractor #2 is: _____

problem _____ Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

15. Many competitions and tournaments extend over several days, during which time you may have to compete in several different events, heats, or games. Do you know how to take a mental break **between each event** throughout the tournament?

never _____ always
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

A) What do you do to take a mental break between events of an extended competition or tournament?

16. Are you successful at allowing yourself to take a mental break when it might be helpful?

never 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 always

III. COMPETITION FOCUS

17. At the competition site do you remind yourself of your strengths?

never 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 always

18. Do you look for advantages or opportunities in every situation you face?

never 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 always

19. Do you find reasons to believe in yourself? (Why you can do well.)

never 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 always

20. If you are concerned about problems at home, school or work, are you able to shift gears and leave those concerns behind for the duration of the competition?

never 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 always

21. Do you know what kind of focus allows you to perform best during competitions?

never 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 always

A) What is your best competition focus?

22. When executing moves, skills, routines or plays in competition, are you able to maintain the “best” focus?

never always
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

IV COMPETITION DISTRACTION CONTROL

During competitions there are a number of things that can distract athletes or take them away from their best focus. For each of the situations listed below, how successful are you at getting back on track, into your positive performance focus?

23. After making an error:

problem Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

24. Poor officiating:

problem Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

25. Opponents outstanding performance:

problem Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

26. Not feeling 100% (not in ideal performance state):

problem Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

27. Negative thoughts:

problem Get right
 getting back 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 back on track
 on track

28. Coach’s comments and/or behaviour:

problem											Get right	
getting back	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	back on track
on track												

29. Environmental conditions (e.g., the weather or facility):

problem											Get right	
getting back	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	back on track
on track												

30. Change in momentum:

problem											Get right	
getting back	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	back on track
on track												

31. Being evaluated:

problem											Get right	
getting back	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	back on track
on track												

32. Thinking about the outcome:

problem											Get right	
getting back	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	back on track
on track												

• Identify and rate other distractors:

Distractor #1 is: _____

problem											Get right	
getting back	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	back on track
on track												

Distractor #2 is: _____

problem											Get right	
getting back	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	back on track
on track												

V. POST COMPETITION LEARNING

33. **After competition/games or performances** are you successful at **drawing out lessons** that can help you for next time?

never always

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

34. Do you **act** on these lessons you draw out at your next practice or competition?

never always

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

35. After competition/games are you successful at shifting gears and leaving today’s competition behind, especially if things didn’t go well?

never always

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

A) What works best for you to shift focus away from thinking about the competition?

- This concludes the mental training exercise for quality performance. In the space below indicate what you feel are your strengths that can help you perform well in competitions.

- Where do you think you need most work to improve the level or consistency of your performance in competitions?

- What are you going to do to prepare yourself to perform your best?
