



Mental Skills For Referees



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Emotional Intelligence

Handball will always be an emotional experience for all participants, either positive or negative.

Officials and Referees, who cannot control their emotions, will find themselves fighting inner battles.

How do they handle emotion with intelligence?

How can they enhance and energize performance rather than allow disruption?

Self-control, then, requires the intelligence to manage yourself and those around you in emotionally changed situations.

Self-control is the "ability to perform well under a variety of stress-producing circumstances".

Checklist for Referees

	Always	sometimes	never
Prepares mentally for games			
Able to handle the big game			
Maintains self belief with positive self talk			
Persists in the face of frustration			
Adapts easily to any situation			
Copes calmly with stress			
Can be relied upon in critical moments			
Deals with other people in a mature, positive manner			
Accepts accountability for actions - never seeks excuses			
Can be trusted regardless of circumstances			

12 Steps for achieving self-control

Like confidence, self-control is a quality that referees have to possess.

Even if can not control themselves they are not able to control the game

Self-control is based upon the the relationship between thoughts and emotions. We know that our state of mind influences our emotions. Which in turn, energizes our performance.

So in order to improve performance by controlling emotions we need to change our thinking.

1. **Awareness** - analyze when loss of control occurred in the past. Why, when and where did it happen? Identify your personal weaknesses.
2. **Understanding** - realize why your thinking changed and how it caused an emotional imbalance.
3. **Differences** - remember examples of when you kept control and lost control in similar circumstances. What were the differences in your attitude, emotions and behavior?
4. **Problem** - try to find the problem. (e.g.). Is it a sense of failure?
5. **Belief** - raise the expectation you have of yourself, include self-control as one of your virtues.
6. **Reinforcement** - behavior change is accelerated by reinforcement, so reward good behaviors.
7. **Goals** - always set yourself a series of achievable small goals that will effect change.
8. **Techniques** - build a series of behavioral techniques for maintaining calm and self-control (how you will react to pressure.)
9. **Planning** - achieve your goals by following a planned program.
10. **Progress** - improvement comes in a series of ups and downs, so be patient. 11. **Setbacks**
11. **Setbacks** - accept that setbacks will occur from time to time, be tolerant and become even stronger mentally.
12. **Remember** - review and recall what you are doing in order to grow and improve.

Techniques to improve self-control

1. Pre-game preparation

Most situations can be anticipated and discussed before the game. Strategies for dealing with such situations can be agreed at this time. Mental preparation enables officials to be ready for any eventuality. Experienced instructors can help officials understand the link between thoughts, feelings and actions. Video analysis can help this process.

2. Be relaxed

The ideal performance state for officials is that of "relaxed readiness", possessing energy without tension. This state allows the officials to stay calm, loose and responsive to the emotional pressures of the game.

Relaxation techniques can help officials control their thinking, so they can trigger emotions that remove unnecessary tensions and conserve energy.

Anxiety is often described as "information that will not go away". Relaxation clears the mind and enables the officials to deal with it and move towards relaxed readiness.

Relaxation techniques include:

- Stretching.
- Breathing control.
- Arousal management (music, video).
- Massage.
- Visualisation.

Referees wishing to develop relaxation skills should organize a quiet place. They should try to select something to focus on, allow a passive attitude to develop and seek to enjoy a state of nothingness. They also should be able to

Develop Performance Routines (Rituals)

Behavioral routines that help control our thinking will ultimately lead to better self-control.

When preparing for the game, all officials are subjected to positive and negative thinking, but attitude is a choice. The mentally strong referee will only allow positive thoughts to predominate. That is why an active behavioral routine before every game keeps officials busy, comfortable and focused on positive thoughts. Pre-game routines can even be produced in written form in much the same way as a pre-game mechanics board.

Pre-Game Routine Card (Self Talk)

- Be confident.
- Know my job.
- Breathe deeply, stay cool.
- Do simple things well.
- Feel good, look confident.
- Deal with adversity.
- Relax and enjoy myself.
- Stay strong, however long the game lasts.
- Seize the moment and have no regrets.

Positive Self Talk

You should discipline yourself to allow only positive self-talk to you and your partner

Physical Reminders

Behaviour/actions that trigger positive self talk.

Modeling

When you are having problems with self-identity, a way to create a positive attitude is to model an referee he/she admires.

Visualization

A process in which you visualize the desired performance and banish all negative thoughts.

SUMMARY

If anxiety is information that will not go away, then the greatest danger to officials self-control are the internal or external distractions that can destroy concentration and trigger negative thoughts. Officiating is the process of reading and reacting, with officials reading the ever changing flow of the game., choosing and executing the correct responses. Successful referees excel at both reading the game and knowing how to ignore distractions from both participants and spectators.