

## Mindfulness and Performance

Many athletes are critical of their past performances or concerned about their future performance-related behaviors, so they may lose focus on their current situations. Mindfulness, the non-judgmental awareness or focus on the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Schmidt & Kupper, 2012; Ulmer, Stetson, & Salmon, 2010), allows athletes to experience and reflect on each moment without viewing and reacting to the situation or moment as positive or negative (Bernier et al., 2009; Gardner & Moore, 2004; Thompson, Kaufman, De Petrillo, Glass, & Arnkoff, 2011).

Mindfulness also allows athletes to become aware of personal thoughts, feelings, and other internal stimuli and encourages athletes to focus on personal values or processes of sport related skills and game strategies instead of focusing on performance outcomes (Pineau, Glass, & Kaufman, 2014). Awareness and acceptance of the present moment may allow athletes to focus less on negative thoughts, which may provide athletes with more energy and focus for the athletic tasks at hand (Pineau et al., 2014). Mindful athletes may be better equipped to allow the focus of their attention to be directed toward task-relevant external stimuli, such as opponents, and behavioral choices, such as implementation of skills and strategies that may lead to improved athletic performance (Moore, 2009). Thus, mindfulness allows individuals to concentrate their attention on the present moment and not dwell on the past nor worry about the future. Additionally, instead of changing or stopping unwanted thoughts, mindfulness teaches athletes to play with such thoughts (Bernier et al., 2009; Gardner & Moore, 2004). This is important for athletes because concern about past or future performances may prevent them from performing their best or from enjoying their sport.