

## MENTAL PERFORMANCE MASTERY PROJECT

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The Mental Performance Mastery course provided me with some helpful concepts for thinking about how to improve the mental component of my coaching. The mental side of athletics is vital because it can often determine whether teams are successful and whether goals get accomplished in a season. Below, I reflect on some of the key ideas that I took away from the course and possible ways in which I intend to apply them in my coaching next year.

- (1) **ELITE MINDSET** - This concept is almost identical to the idea of growth vs. fixed mindset that is covered in the skillful teaching course. This idea is incredibly important because a player's mentality about whether they can improve or progress further makes all the difference to their ability to perform at a high level. Players with an elite mindset can not only improve their basic skills, but they can also learn and grow from setbacks. This is important for our teams that are quite successful at reaching the end of playoffs, but sometimes face setbacks in the most important and high-profile games. Some practical steps I plan to take to work on Elite Mindset include:
  - (a) Use Carol Dweck's questionnaire assessment with my players to identify areas where we can improve.
  - (b) Emphasizing elite mindset as the coach and leading by example in this area. This includes being aware for phrases that might move us away from having an elite mindset, and also turning negative situations in a practice or game into positives.
  - (c) Teaching the "formula":  $\text{Event} + \text{Response} = \text{Outcome}$ . I plan to encourage students to keep a weekly event log in which they record events that present a challenge to them or cause them to mess up on achieving a goal. Review of these logs can provide discussion points with individual players as well as with the entire team.
  - (d) Implement a START, STOP, CONTINUE log for players to help them develop focus so they can be doing the right things at the present moment to achieve their goals.
  - (e) Working on players on essential skills required for an elite mindset: body language, focus and self-talk.
- (2) **FOCUS AND AWARENESS** - Focus is the ability to zero in on a particular task, while awareness is the ability to recognize distractions and refocus back on the task at hand. While the former is quite well-understood, the latter is under-emphasized in a lot of coaching. These two issues have become especially important in the years following the COVID pandemic in which almost every student has suffered in their ability to progress in both these areas. With the younger students that I work with, these problems

are also more emphasized. Athletes with high levels of focus and awareness take ownership and show up for practices and competition on time. They recognize and focus on aspects that they can control.

- (a) A practical tool I would like to implement in my coaching is the concentration grid which tests the athlete's ability to concentrate and stay in the present.
  - (b) I would like to use the signal lights framework to give my students an easy way to understand their awareness and be aware of their distractions. In addition, in a yellow or red light situation, I would like to provide them with a clear plan for how to respond. In particular, having them think intentionally through their body-language, focus, self-talk, physical feelings and situations in competition during the green/yellow/red phases may prove to be helpful in increasing their awareness and focus.
  - (c) I would like to implement some practical drills to work on focus - the 30-second drill and the ABC's of focus.
- (3) **PROCESS VS. OUTCOME** - This mentality is the ability to stay focused on the journey without getting caught up with the final result. This is a key concept that the JV players need to get under their belt. Their main goal should be their development into a varsity player, and not necessarily the immediate results. "When you're committed to the process, you always win because you're improving daily. You are constantly moving towards what you want because of the small, consistent actions you're taking" - B. Cain. A practical coaching strategy I would like to implement is emphasizing the importance of what we can control. Teaching athletes to differentiate between what they can and cannot control is vital. One way to do this is to make a list of all the things that are non-controllable - officials, fans, media, the other team, playing time, field conditions, scheduling, etc, as well as the things which we can control - attitude, body language, self-talk, present-moment focus, process, preparation, etc. Helping athletes differentiate this knowledge clearly in their minds will help them to focus on the process rather than the outcome.
- (4) **TIME MANAGEMENT** - Our athletes at Scarsdale are often overworked and overbooked. Time management is a key skill that they need to develop in order to be successful both in athletics and also in their other endeavors. One practical coaching concept I would like to emphasize is the MIT (most important task). This strategy helps athletes identify what is most important for success, to direct focus and energy to these tasks first, and then allow room for flexibility. Most athletes will have success selecting no more than three MITs for their goals. One step I plan to take in order to minimize decision-fatigue, is to encourage athletes to create their MIT list at the end of the day or before going to bed so that when they wake up the next day, they are ready to go.



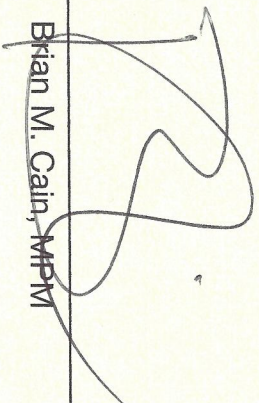
I hereby certify that

**Michael Kumaresan**

Has successfully met the requirements for the  
**Mental Performance Mastery (MPM) Coaching Certification**



6/27/2022  
Date of Certification

  
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Brian M. Cain, MPM





## Results

46 of 50 Questions answered correctly

**You have reached 46 of 50 point(s), (92%)**

You did it!

Congratulations on passing the exam. Your completion certificate will be mailed to you shortly, but first, we have to ask...

### Do we have your correct mailing address?

We mail certificates to the shipping address you gave us when you purchased the course.

Would you like us to ship to a different address?

No problem! Send an email to [brian1@briancain.com](mailto:brian1@briancain.com) within 24 hours of completing your quiz and we'll make sure your certificate is sent to the right place.

Again, congrats on finishing the course and becoming a certified mental performance master. We hope you found the information valuable and are ready to put it to work for you and your clients/athletes.