

The Mental Playbook

Module 1: Personal mastery

Unit 1: Become your own best coach

REVIEWING

1. Do you currently take responsibility for reviewing your last week of training and preparation? (Where 1 is no responsibility and 10 is full responsibility).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2. In what ways can you improve on the process of reviewing your past weeks training and preparation?

3. Do you take responsibility for reviewing your performance after a game in order to understand what worked and what didn't?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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4. In what ways can you improve on your personal post-match review process?

PLANNING

1. Do you take responsibility for planning your upcoming week of training and preparation?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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2. How can you improve on planning your weekly training and preparation to work on the areas that will help you get even better?

3. Do you take responsibility for planning your game?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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4. How can you improve on your pre-match planning process?

Note: Download the Weekly Entry book to improve your review and planning process.

Unit 2: A player and a person

1. Think of a really talented athlete who you think is a dickhead. What is it about them that makes you think that?

2. Think of a really successful athlete who you really respect as a person. What is it about them that makes you feel that way?

3. Review your answers to the above two questions, and write down any messages from these that apply to you. What 2-3 behaviours do you need to avoid, and what 2-3 things do you need to do more?

4. Imagine you are at an event to celebrate a special occasion, maybe your birthday or a recent big success. All the important people in your life and career who you respect the most are there. As they stand around chatting, you realise they are speaking about you. If this happened, what would you want them to be saying? In the far right column, use a 1-10 rating to score how well you think you are currently living according to that ideal. Where 10/10 is "I'm already doing and living everything they are saying".

Who?	What are they saying?	Score
Team mates		
Coaches		
Opponents		
Fans		
Family		
Friends		
Other significant others		
You	<i>What do you say about yourself in your proudest moments?</i>	

5. What 2-3 actions can you take within the 1-3 weeks that will move you 5% closer to your ideal?

6. Write down the names of 3-5 people you admire most. They can be dead or alive, athletes, real people, religious icons or fictional characters from movies or books. Next to each name, write down three words to describe what you most admire about them.

Person you admire most	Three words to describe them
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	

7. Make one list of all the words you used to describe those people. Include all of them, but don't write down any repeats. You don't need to use all of the rows available. Once you've written them down, rank each word on a scale of 1-10 in terms of its importance in your life. 1 = not important, 5 = averagely important, 10 = crucial. You can allocate the same value to two different words, but try to score them differently. For example, avoid scoring them all 10/10.

Values	Score
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

8. Make a list of all the words you ranked from 8/10 and higher. There is a very high chance that many or all of these are actually your values. You only recognise them in others because they are already within you.

9. Try to reduce your list down to 3-5 of the most important values to you. You will have more that are important, but it's the 3-5 most important ones that really matter for now. How can you live these values even more in your life?

Unit 3: Tame your self-limiting tendencies

You're at the same event as in the previous exercise, celebrating a special occasion. Those same people really like you and want to help you learn and grow. To do this, they know they may need to have a difficult conversation with you. Because they genuinely care, they pluck up the courage to give you honest feedback about some of the things you tend to do, or neglect to do, that don't serve you, or that you sometimes do when you're under pressure or stressed.

Write down what these people might tell about how you undermine yourself that you know in some situations can be true. This exercise should leave 95% of you feeling uncomfortable or even very uncomfortable. If this happens, excellent. You are right on track to identifying and removing some of your self-limiting tendencies. Be courageous as you do this exercise.

Who?	What are they saying?
Team mates	
Coaches	
Opponents	
Fans	
Family	
Friends	
Other significant others	
You	<i>What are the things you know about yourself that hold you back from living your best life and delivering your best performances? There are the things you probably don't want anyone to know about.</i>

1. Pick 2-3 of your most common self-limiting tendencies. For each of these, write down 2-3 ideas of what you can do to avoid falling into these traps.

Remember, these tendencies are normal and happen to everyone. What's important is:

1. Knowing what they are;
2. Recognising them early before you act them out;
3. Finding ways to get better at controlling them and the behaviours they might lead to.

Module 2: Professional mastery

Unit 1: The eight pieces of your professional puzzle

What are the eight most important factors of your game in terms of on-field performance? Keep this about your sport rather than your life in general. I suggest discussing these aspects with a team mate or coach to confirm you have captured the eight most important factors of **your** game. Add a short definition or description next to each factor to highlight what it means for you. Keep it simple and practical.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Assess the key factors of your game by completing the table below:

Factor <i>List your 8 factors here.</i>	Importance <i>How important is this factor for your professional development on a scale of 1-10?</i>	Satisfaction <i>How happy are you with what is currently happening in this factor of your game on a scale of 1-10?</i>	Investment <i>How much of your time and energy are you currently spending on this factor on a scale of 1-10?</i>
1.			
2.			

3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			

Advancing your game: Select two or three factors you believe are the most obvious and easiest to improve. Choose the simple and easy wins, ideally looking for 5-10% improvement. You do not have to change your world in one go.

Factor	Action	Support	Accountability
	<i>Practical action you can take in the next 1-2 weeks to advance.</i>	<i>What support do you need and from whom?</i>	<i>Who will you ask to keep you accountable?</i>
1.			
2.			
3. <i>Optional</i>			

This is a good exercise to do regularly to ensure you are continuously staying on top of your game.

Unit 2: Play to your strengths

Know your strengths as well as you know your weaknesses, but practice and play to your strengths around 80% of the time.

In Unit 1, you identified the eight key factors in your sport. In this exercise, try to identify your main strength in each area.

Factor	Primary strength in this area
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

Of all the strengths you have written down, pick the top 3 you think will make the biggest contribution towards ensuring your continued success in sport and write down how you ensure these strengths are constantly fine-tuned, polished and remain sharpened as your main tool for success.

Strength	Action
1.	
2.	
3.	

1. Can you recall a time when you tried something new or different when sticking to your strengths may have served you better in that situation? Describe this situation, your thinking, the result, and what you might do differently next time.

2. Can you recall a time when you overplayed one of the strengths identified above? Describe the situation, your thinking, the result, and how you can avoid doing this in the future.

Unit 3: Ethics and your legacy

Unit 4: Teamwork

1. In your sport, what are 3-5 common attitudes of selfish players or energy sappers?

2. What are visible behaviours you might see in someone with a selfish attitude? Without naming any names, try to give practical examples that you have witnessed.

3. What are five common attitudes of team energisers?

4. What visible behaviours do team energisers display? Use practical examples you have experienced.

5. What are two 'energy sapping' attitudes you tend to have if you or your team are underperforming? This may be challenging, but you can only control what you are aware of – so write them down. The better you know these tendencies, the better your chances of spotting them early and avoiding them.

6. What three attitudes best describe you when you are being a team energiser?

Unit 5: Meet your ego

Module 3: Mental mastery

Unit 1: mental errors

In this unit, you learnt about the three-part sequence of mental errors. In this exercise, your job is to identify your unique triggers and how they play out as mental errors. Awareness is the first step towards overcoming these errors on the field.

1. Think back to some of the in-competition errors you have made over the past season or two. Write down at least three external events that tend to trigger you on some level. You can start by asking yourself three questions:
 - a. Opponents: Are there specific opponents that trigger you, or things opponents do or say, stronger opponents, weaker opponents, or anything else about opponents that tends to distract you?
 - b. Situations: Are there game or competition situations that trigger you, like being behind, being far ahead, things being close, or scoreboard pressure?
 - c. Conditions: What competition conditions tend to trigger you, such as weather, the pitch, condition of the playing field, televised games or non-televised, etc.,?

2. Now consider your internal reaction to the external events you identified. Do you feel angry, nervous, annoyed, aggressive, vulnerable, unfocussed, overly excited? You may not know exactly what emotions you feel, but take your best guess. Remember, most people have very little understanding of what goes on in their mind. Those who know their mind best can manage it best. Your reaction to these external triggers will be unique to you.

3. How do you think these feelings play out in your game in terms of skill, tactics or the decisions you make? What is your most common response to these specific internal thoughts or emotions in game-time? Does your focus get pulled away from your own

game and onto a person, do you get unnecessarily angry or vengeful? As a batsman in cricket, I generally made over-attaching errors against slow bowling, and overly-hesitant or tentative errors against fast bowling. Your errors may tend towards over-attacking, being overly-aggressive, being overly-defensive, hesitant, or doubtful. Write down your most common mental errors.

4. Based on what you've written above, what advice would you give yourself, to reduce the power that these events have over your focus in game time? What reminders are important to prevent you getting caught up in these side-shows? What are the important processes that are important to keep your focus on - and that will give you the best chance of success?

Unit 2: Managing memories

Bad memories

In this unit, you explored how memories can impact your performance. In this exercise, you're going to have a chance to unpack memories that may be holding you back.

- 1. Think of a time when something that was outside of your control went wrong. For example, perhaps you suffered an unlucky injury, or when COVID-19, bad weather, or bad luck derailed your plans, or something similar. What was the event or incident?

1.1 What was the impact on you at the time - how did you feel?

1.2 What is the impact on you today?

1.3 What is the lesson you learned from how you managed yourself around that event?

1.4 What is your best advice to yourself, to manage yourself around something similar in future?

2. Think of one of the worst things someone did to wrong you - to offend, upset or hurt you. Write it down.

2.1 What was the impact on you at the time - how did you feel?

2.2 In what way are you still impacted by this today? What baggage are you still carrying from what they did?

2.3 What would the wisest person you know advise you to do about this situation?

2.4 What would your answer be to this advice?

3. Think of something you did that you ideally wish you hadn't done, something that you regret, are embarrassed about or you wish you had done differently. What was this 'mistake' that you made?

3.1 How did you feel at the time?

3.2 What happened as a result of your mistake?

3.3 In what way are you still carrying the baggage from that event?

3.4 What would the wisest person you know advise you to do about this situation?

3.5 What would your answer be to that person?

Good memories

1. In this exercise, write down things you are lucky to have in your life, the emotions these bring up for you, some of the traps you have seen others in your situation fall into, and what you can do instead.

Positive in your life	Feelings about this	What doesn't work	What does work
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

2. Think back to one of your greatest personal successes on the sports field, when you delivered at or near your highest potential. Describe the success in one sentence.

-
-
3. What were the main things you did really well that contributed to this success?
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4. What were the main things you learned from what you did that would be useful to remember for the future?

5. Think back to a time when you did something really well in game or competition time, and immediately afterwards you made a really unnecessary mistake - maybe by making a bad decision, getting ahead of yourself, or losing concentration. Describe what you did well in one sentence.

6. Describe the visible mistake you made immediately afterwards. For example, missed a tackle or played a poor shot.

7. What was the cause of this mistake? What went on in your mind that caused that error?

8. What lesson did you learn from this experience that would be useful to remember for next time?

Unit 3: Anticipating the future

Pressure

- 1. In your sport, who would you consider to be one or two of the players who have “Big Match Temperament” (BMT)? What do you think it is about their mindset that makes them just that bit better than the rest in the highest pressure moments?

- 2. What are the game-time situations, conditions or type of opponent that tend to leave you underaroused, too laid back, complacent or too comfortable to get the best out of you?

- 3. What are the game-time situations, conditions or opponents that tend to leave you over-aroused, over-anxious, over-stressed or panicky - and that ends up choking your performance?

- 4. What are the things in game time that get the best out of you? What situations, conditions or opponents really help push you into your best performances. List as many of these as possible.

Fear

1. What are two or three common fears athletes in your sport experience?

2. How do you think these fears most commonly play out in their performance?

3. What are the two or three things you tend to worry about the most in your sport? Think about the opponents you worry about or fear, what difficult game situation(s) you worry about, or what negative outcome(s) you think about the most.

4. For each fear you identified, write down what's the worst thing that could happen if that fear became a reality. Once you have your answer, ask the same question again.

5. If this activity doesn't alleviate your worries or concerns, refer to points 2-6 in the course material, and pick the one(s) that you think most resonate with you. Write down how you could apply these for each concern.

6. Fear is one of the biggest mental obstacles to success in sport. What are your main take-aways from this section? Write down key things you want to remember that could benefit your game going forward.

Module 4: Mastering game time

Unit 1: Overcoming distractions

1. What are the main aspects of your game/competition-day routine that are the most important? These are the things you consistently do before arriving at each game or competition that help you get in the zone. Think about your routine from the time you wake up on game day, until the time you arrive at the competition venue.

2. Describe the key elements of your ideal pre-activity routine. This refers to going from switch-down to switching-up in the moments immediately before execution time or the start of your race, event, game, or contest.

3. What are your trigger words?

4. Which switch-up routines covered in this course resonate most with you (breathing, singing, your posture, trigger movement, trigger words, confidence, trust, or WIN)? How can you use them in your game? Include any others that you find effective that have not been covered here.

5. How can you train your switch-up routines in training and practice so that they become even more automated in game time – especially in these really high pressure moments when you might be tempted to revert to old habits?

6. What are your main take-aways from this section on being correctly focused in game time?

Unit 2: Finding flow

1. What are your main take-aways from this section on finding flow?

2. What are practical actions you can take over the next 3 months that will set you up to access the zone a little more often, and stay there just a little longer?
