



FIBA

We Are Basketball

FIBA OFFICIALS MANUAL

MENTAL PREPARATION GENERAL GUIDELINES

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FIBA OFFICIALS MANUAL

MENTAL PREPARATION

GENERAL GUIDELINES

FOREWORD

FIBA has created a wide range of supporting programmes that are aimed at facilitating a referees' preparation in order to ultimately be successful during the game. Some of these programmes relate to normal officiating training inclusive of, call selection, mechanics and techniques, physical performance training, using technological tools and equally important - mental preparation.

In order to help basketball referees prepare mentally, Mrs Dubravka Martinović, a sports psychologist and who has been collaborating with the FIBA Referee Operations since 2014, has developed a set of documents in this field. This guide will provide referees with new tools to improve their understanding of the mental requirements for officiating as well as their own responses and behaviour in the challenging situations that they may face. Finally, the application of these proper mental preparation tools can enhance your own well-being as well.

Note:

In addition to this Guide, some of the chapters have been sectionalized and will be distributed into smaller topics in the series of "Improve Your" documents.

Enjoy your reading and hopefully you will find this material helpful.

@ your service,

FIBA Referee Operations

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in **modern sport officiating**, beside good physical preparation and knowledge of the rules, mechanics and positioning, it is essential to be **mentally prepared**. Therefore, we have prepared this manual to provide you with basic information about psychological or mental preparation in basketball officiating.

It consists of both **theoretical and practical guidelines** on how to learn and improve some psychological skills which will help you perform better. You can read this manual as a whole or by chapter, depending on what you want to improve or understand better.

- In CHAPTER 1, you will find information on GOAL-SETTING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN through your career. The intention of this chapter is to provide you with information on basic goal-setting principles that will help you to restructure your long-term, dream goals to process and development goals that will eventually lead you to the desirable outcome – your ultimate goal. Goal-setting is effective because it focuses attention, increases effort and motivation, encourages persistence, and regulates mind-set and behaviour to develop strategies and problem solving solutions directed towards goal achievement. The more your goals are internally motivated and personalized the better the chance to achieve them. Through one specific exercise explained in the chapter, you will see how to set goals for yourself and how goal-setting can help you in your career.
- CHAPTER 2 gives you an insight on CONCENTRATION AND ATTENTION as one of the most essential executive psychological skills. It is not unusual to hear referees say after the game “My performance was bad because of the low concentration I had during the game!”, “I could not manage to focus properly, so most of the time I was out of the game!”, “My concentration oscillated during the game and I didn’t feel comfortable!”. In this Chapter, you will find basic information on selective attention and attention shifting required for a top performance. Attention control and selectivity are the result of your preparation through understanding the characteristics and demands of officiating. Attention should be focused as selectively as possible on relevant information and cues, excluding at the same time irrelevance and interference. Also, the more your skills are over-learned, the more you are prepared and experienced. You will be able to shift your attention according to the situation. Guided through some examples and exercises, you will be able to understand what is going on with your concentration and attention during the game, as this is essential to proper decisions making.
- CHAPTER 3 helps you find your OPTIMAL LEVEL OF AROUSAL and learn how to keep it under control. You will find both relaxation and activation techniques explained through examples and specific exercises. Techniques such as: relaxation breathing, imagery activation, self-talk and many others will help you adjust your activation level (by increasing or decreasing it) and reach your optimal arousal zone. If you learn to understand, change and control your arousal level, you will be able to perform more automatically and smoothly, and therefore more appropriately in various situations during the game.
- Through reading CHAPTER 4, you will discover how much your SELF-TALK and your interpretation style of specific situations and/or events can influence your performance. Used purposely, it can be a very powerful technique to improve your performance. To gain control over your self-talk, you must first become more aware of the words and sentences that you use. When you become aware of them and start to recognize your self-talk, particularly distorted thinking and irrational beliefs, you can change them into rational and affirmative ones. A big advantage of using positive/affirmative self-talk is that it helps you remain focused on the task (performance) at the present

– here and now. **KEY WORDS** help you to eliminate the distracting, confidence-deflating effects of negative thoughts and self-talk. Key words or sentences can create a positive mental state and reinforce your performance, because the more you repeat a thought, the more automatic it becomes, and eventually lead to belief.

- CHAPTER 5 helps you understand and learn one of the most effective psychological techniques used in sport – **IMAGERY**. In imagery, we can construct scenes that never occurred in reality and rehearse events that have not yet happened. If you learn to do it correctly, it can improve and maximize the transfer from practice to performance. It can increase your self-confidence, reduce anxiety, re-direct and shift your attention properly so that you may feel prepared and ready for the game. Through presented imagery exercises in this chapter, you will learn to control and manage difficult problem situations, to rehearse skills, mechanics/positioning and even improve your concentration.
- CHAPTER 6 presents basic guidelines on how to **FACE STRESSFUL AND CHALLENGING SITUATIONS**. During a career and through life we experience many stressful situations. Being focused on solutions, activating your constructive self-talk, and strengths you already possess can help you control the controllable and face many problems and challenges.
- CHAPTER 7 is about mental strength during **INJURY AND RECOVERY**. This chapter presents basic principles on injury prevention and psychological view of rehabilitation after injury and during the recovery process.
- Finally, in CHAPTER 8 will be presented some guidelines on how to keep **PASSION, MOTIVATION AND ENTHUSIASM** for officiating. Having a sense of purpose, revising your goals, adding new challenges, and imagining your legacy are only a few of the principles that can help you keep your passion for officiating.



GOAL-SETTING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

CHAPTER 1: GOAL-SETTING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

When thinking about our professional success and career development, we are usually highly motivated and driven by a desire for success. However, the main questions should be “Am I willing to commit in order to achieve my goals? Am I willing to make any or all sacrifices required for goal achievement?” **Goal-setting** is a great starting point because it helps you to identify what you want and how you will accomplish it by developing a **systematic action plan**.



Table 1. Types of goals

TYPES OF GOALS	
<p>Process goals</p> <p>Task-oriented goals refers to improve form, skill, knowledge, technique or strategy. Helpful when you learn a new movement, skill or technique. For example, new positioning in 3PO mechanics or new signal and rule application.</p>	<p>Long - term yearly (1-4 yrs)</p>
<p>Performance goals</p> <p>Refers to improve overall performance. To achieve your performance goals, you must achieve a series of process goals. For example, if you want to be better in 3PO, you should learn and master new positioning movement and techniques.</p>	<p>Mid - term monthly (3-6 mnt)</p>
<p>Outcome goals</p> <p>Result or product oriented goals. To attain them, it is required to achieve performance goals. For example, if you want to earn more nominations, you need to perform great 3PO officiating.</p>	<p>Short - term weekly (1-4 w)</p>
	<p>Daily</p>

It is important that you evaluate your progress in achieving short-term process goals. This will help you stay motivated, and gives you feedback about possible adjustments on action plans. Sometimes, because of some unexpected and unpredictable life events (i.e. injuries, life, family and personal issues) or skill development process speed (you are progressing faster or slower than expected), you may encounter obstacles that will force you to adjust your plan to achieve the goals (Figure 1). You will need to adjust either process/plan, specific solutions or timeline.

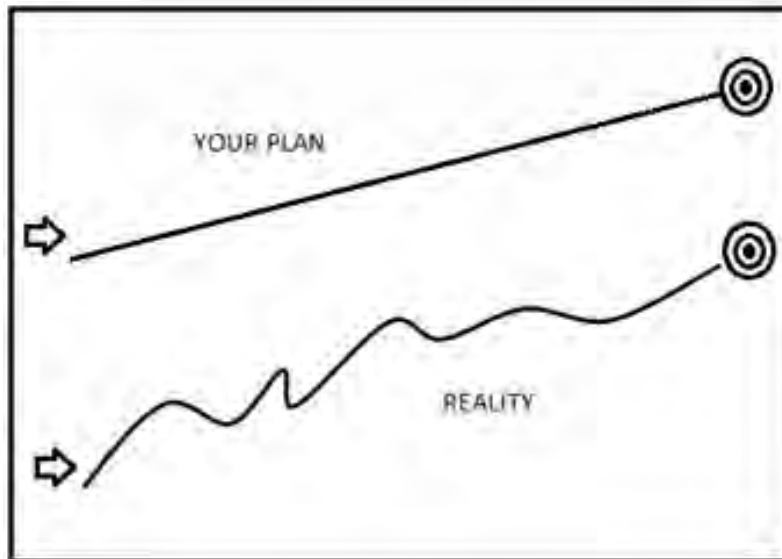


Figure 1. Your plan to achieve the goal vs reality

REMEMBER

Make an improvement plan in one day:

- Always restructure your outcome, ultimate and long-term goals to process performance and short-term goals.
- Set your goals in affirmative way, focusing on what you want to increase or include, rather than on what you want to reduce or avoid.
- Make action plans and write them.
- Make sure that you evaluate your progress, weekly or monthly.

EXERCISE 1: 3 GOALS

1. I want to become more physically fit
2. I want to be better in 3PO mechanics
3. I want to become Crew Chief

GOAL No.1. "I WANT TO BECOME MORE PHYSICALLY FIT!"

- **Be more specific:** I want to increase my muscle mass, especially in my upper body. I want to have a better endurance. (Now you have two specific goals).
- **Set the time relation:** Until the beginning of the season (short-term to mid-term goals).
- **Make a plan:** personalized program with a fitness coach. Going three times a week to the gym to work on my muscle mass. Running five times a week in the morning for 40 minutes.

GOAL No.2. "I WANT TO BE BETTER IN 3PO MECHANICS!"

- **Be more specific:** I want to improve my movements in 3PO mechanics, especially reading the play and adjusting my position..
- **Set the time relation:** Until the beginning of the spring season, I want to be better in 3PO mechanics (mid-term goal).
- **Make a plan:** I will download the application on mechanics for basketball officiating. Each day, I will take 60 minutes to work on the programme. Every second day, I will search for video clips and game analysis to see some 3PO mechanics at high level officiating. Each day, I will use imagery scripts to improve my movements in mechanics. I will imagine situations when I should adjust my position more based on the play. I will prepare scripts for positioning when I am in a lead role and repeat them through imagery.

GOAL No. 3. "I WANT TO BECOME CREW CHIEF!"

- **Be more specific:** Next season (mid to long-term goal).
- Restructure it to fit the main CC characteristics – ask yourself: "What skills and knowledge are important for becoming a CC in officiating?" – performance and process goals. I.e. High level of rule knowledge, high level of rule application, fit body presence, good communication skills, game control skills, concentration consistency, team worker, etc.
- **What you need to improve the most:** For example: the most important to improve: Fit body presence, rule application and communication skills (three goals).
- **Make a plan:**
 1. FIT BODY PRESENCE (refers to the 1st goal you set earlier).
 2. RULE APPLICATION: each day (or every second day), I will use 60 minutes to read one segment of a rulebook. After reading, I will search some examples in video clips from a specific game and see what it means to apply the rules I have just read. Each week, I will take some rule knowledge quizzes to see the development of my knowledge. Each week, I will officiate at least one friendly game.
 3. COMMUNICATION SKILLS: I will find what are the basic principles in communication – communication process, types, rules, context, and others that will help me to be better in communicating with my colleagues, coaches, and players. Do I need to improve more my verbal or non-verbal communication skills? I will watch high level officiating games to see how more experienced referees communicate during the game.

When you restructure all of your process and performance development goals into short-term weekly and daily plans, you may be surprised by how much effort, sacrifice and work is required to achieve some of the goals. At that moment, it is important to **remind yourself that this is Your goal and Your choice to do it or not**. If you want to become a great referee eventually, you will want to do this because by doing it, you are closer to your dream goal!

It is certainly important to emphasize those goals motivated by personal growth, progress, enjoyment and satisfaction with, as we do have a greater chance of these being achieved rather than those that are solely motivated by status, fame, money, and prestige. The more personal and specific your goals are, and the more internally oriented your motivation is, the work and effort invested in achieving them will be greater and more productive.

'SMART' METHOD

- S (Specific) - set specific, clear, and concrete goals that answer the questions "What do I want to achieve / improve / learn?" And "How will I achieve / improve / learn that?".
- M (Measurable) - your goals must be measurable so you can track your progress. Goals must visibly and objectively answer the question "Am I better than yesterday?", "Have I achieved / improved / learned what I wanted?"
- A (Attainable) - it is important that your goals are challenging, set high but also achievable, possible and realistic.
- R (Relevant) - set goals that are important to you personally, that are your personal choice.
- T (Time based) - set in a specific time frame. They answer the question "In what time period do I want to achieve / improve / learn that?".

Many examples have shown that it is determination and perseverance that largely determine success. Motivation, plan, work, training, focus, knowledge, and talent can help us achieve goals and success, but if determination and perseverance are missing, then it is almost impossible.

Most people know exactly "what they want" and "how they will achieve it", many systematically work and put effort into it, but only a small number of the most persistent do not give up when they face the first obstacles and problems. It is in those moments when we face challenges that perseverance, determination, and self-confidence separate the successful and the best ones from the others.



CONCENTRATION AND ATTENTION

CHAPTER 2: CONCENTRATION AND ATTENTION

Concentration in sport performance is usually called the executive psychological skill because, in some degree, it controls other skills. During the game your nervous system through all senses detects millions of information from various sources, so it is very important that you filter information that is relevant and vital in order for your performance to be successful.

Table 2. Relevant or helpful and distracting or harmful information

RELEVANT INFORMATION		
<p>EXTERNAL</p> <p>related to information outside yourself that is relevant to your performance : sights, sounds, smells, touch, and other sensory feedback information</p> <p>(basket, ball, court, players, time table, 24" time, lines, co-officials, crowd, etc.)</p>	<p>INTERNAL</p> <p>related to any information that you can focus on inside yourself relevant to your optimal level of performance: affirmative thoughts, positive self-talk, emotions, physiological activity, optimal heart rate, breathing rhythm, and kinesthetic feedback.</p>	<p>PERFORMANCE RELATED</p> <p>profession and sport specific informations: rules, codes, norms, etc.</p>
DISTRACTING INFORMATION		
<p>INTERFERING</p> <p>Internal or external cues that hinder performance directly:</p> <p>negative thoughts and self-talk, thinking about past mistakes, thinking about possible future mistakes, increased heart rate, tiredness, fatigue, noise, co-officials mistakes, inappropriate behavior of coaches, players, fans, etc.</p>	<p>IRRELEVANT</p> <p>cues not relevant for exact situation and your performance but can take your mind away from an effective focus:</p> <p>work, private life issues, social plans for that evening, flight schedule, etc.</p>	

According to Attentional Style Theory (Nideffer, 1976; 1990; 2001) focus of attention shifts along two dimensions: a dimension of **WIDTH (broad to narrow)** and a dimension of **DIRECTION (internal or external)** which results in four different attentional styles (Figure 2).

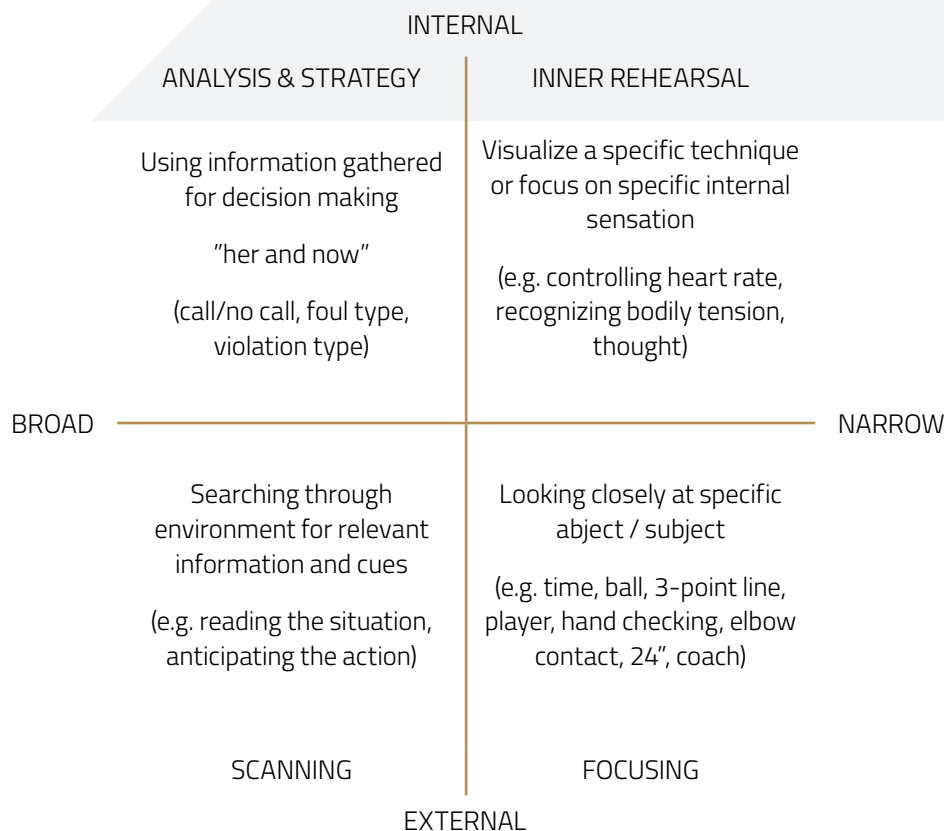


Figure 2. Four attentional styles

During the game while you are officiating, **constant shifting is required**, from external-broad (i.e. scanning the whole situation in your AoR) to **external-narrow** (i.e. hand checking or elbow contact) and **broad-internal** (decision making – call/no call). Because high level officiating requires a good reaction time and decision making, it is really important that you do not "stay" or get "stuck" into one attentional style too long!

TRY TO SHIFT YOUR ATTENTION QUICKLY AND ACCORDING TO SITUATIONAL DEMANDS!

EXAMPLE 1: When you start to think about your previous mistake (self-doubt and negative thought) your arousal increases, shifting breaks down, and attention begins to narrow involuntarily and becomes more internal. You can stay too long in your internal focus and lose a chance to see and recognize the important information that is before and around you during the action that is going on "here and now" (external-broad and external-narrow). If this happens it is important that you shift your attention as soon as possible to broad-external (to see the "big picture") and search for information outside the court when action is actually going on. This shifting usually happens in a few seconds, sometimes in a second or two, depending on the situation's characteristics and demands. Using some **key words** and **affirmative self-talk** can help you to **speed up the shifting** from a "stuck" area to other required cues and areas of attention. The more your skills are over-learned, the more you are prepared and experienced and you will be able to shift your attention and be better in performance.

CONCENTRATION EXERCISES

EXERCISE 1: GRID WITH NUMBERS AND SIGNALS

Your task in this exercise is to connect (with a line) all numbers, by order, beginning from number 1 to number 2, then from number 2 to number 3, from number 3 to number 4, and so on, until you connecting number 49 to number 50.

You can start with 2 minutes and see how many numbers you can connect during that time.

After the 2 minutes have expired, your task is to search for the signal (Ø) and count how many signals are there.

5	12	34	Ø		29	1	16	50
47		48	8	23		Ø	42	
	33		41		3	28	15	32
		21		35			Ø	49
11	40		14	Ø	18	10	26	43
		Ø		17		Ø	6	
24		20				44	7	36
	Ø	38		2	37	31		25
39	4		45	Ø	27		19	
Ø	22	46	13			9	Ø	30

This type of exercise can help you learn to focus your attention and scan the whole picture for relevant cues. You can modify this exercise with higher numbers or a different sign, even letters. Also, when your concentration improves, you can add different types of distractors such loud music or TV. Also, you can reduce the time required to connect the numbers from 2 minutes to 1:45 min.

EXERCISE 2: EXPLORING ATTENTIONAL STYLES

Search for video clips from any game you prefer. Then choose one scene and freeze it. Sit comfortably and let your exploration begin:

1. Study the scene closely and scan the whole situation. Observe the position of the referees according to their AoR. Look at how the players are standing and try to anticipate what will happen next.
2. Now, select a specific object or subject – i.e. shot clock and see how many seconds is left for this action.
3. Now, shift your attention to your heart rate, and try to control your breathing rhythm in a few seconds. Search for the specific sensation while doing it – i.e. air flow during the inhalation.
4. Now, again, scan the whole situation and by anticipating the next move in this scene make a decision in a way as how you would you do (movement or decision) if you were one of the referees.
5. After you made a decision, press play and see what actually happens in the next action.

This type of exercise helps you to experience different attentional styles by shifting your focus through external – internal – broad – narrow dimensions. You can use different scenes and in each of them you can choose different information or cue to focus on.

EXERCISE 3: FIND THE DIFFERENCE

This exercise refers to looking for the differences between what are seemingly the same pictures. Some differences are more visible and clear than others, and your task is to find as many differences as you can within a given period of time.

With this type of exercise you improve your attention shifting and also your patience.

You can find this kind of exercise online for free and practice on your smart phone or computer.



AROUSAL CONTROL

CHAPTER 3: AROUSAL CONTROL

It is alright to have “butterflies in the stomach” as long as they are “flying in formation”. Finding the balance between feeling over-excited and feeling over-relaxed – your optimal arousal level – it is essential for your peak performance.

Arousal level refers to a person’s general psychological and physiological activation of the body that ranges and varies on a continuum from on the one hand deep sleep and on the other hand to panic or intense excitement.

As arousal increases from low to moderate (PSYCH-UP ZONE), performance improves, eventually reaching a zone where performance is at its best (OPTIMAL AROUSAL ZONE). But when arousal is too high and increases beyond the optimal zone (PSYCH-OUT ZONE) it will reduce performance quality (Figure 3).

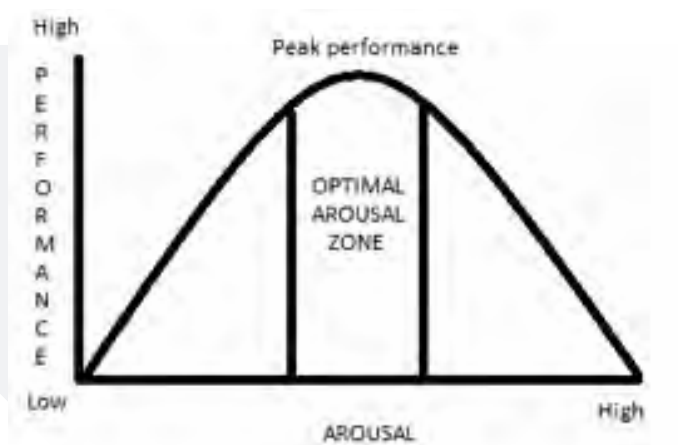


Figure 3. Inverted - U model of arousal performance-relationship and optimal zone of functioning (Burton and Raedeke, 2008; Landers, 2001; Weinberg and Richardson, 1990).

Individuals function differently, and each person has a unique arousal curve (Figure 4). It is important that you do not compare yourself with other officials and that you understand that some of them need to psych-down or relax before the game to achieve their optimal level of arousal, while other need to psych-up or activate.

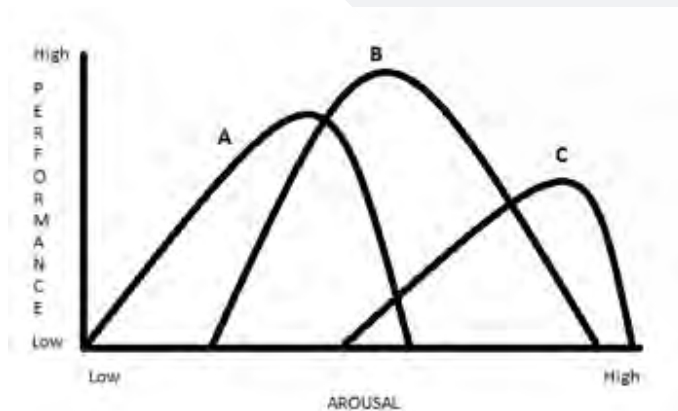


Figure 4. Individuals difference in optimal arousal (energy) zones. Person A, B and C (Burton and Raedeke 2008; Hanin, 2000).

While preparing for the game and actually officiating, it is important that you find your optimal level of arousal and learn how to keep it under control.

Table 3. Arousal control techniques

AROUSAL CONTROL TECHNIQUES		
	RELAXATION TECHNIQUES	ACTIVATION TECHNIQUES
technique	Psych-down relaxation breathing Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) Self-talk and key words Imagery and visualization Music Stretching	Psych-up activation breathing Self-talk and triggers Imagery and visualization Music Physical activity
outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ helps you control your arousal level by decreasing it ▪ decrease unwanted muscular tension, guides your concentration and increases enjoyment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ helps you control your arousal level by increasing it, ▪ enhance your concentration and focus, and elevate your mood state and confidence.

AROUSAL CONTROL EXERCISES

EXERCISE 1: PROLONGED RELAXATION BREATHING

Relaxation breathing rhythm means that exhalation interval is longer for at least two intervals / seconds than inhalation interval. I.e. if your inhalation interval is 4 seconds, than your exhalation interval should be 6 – 8 seconds. Usual relaxation rhythms are: 3:5, 3:6, 4:7, 4:8, etc.

- Sit comfortable and close your eyes. Turn your attention to your breathing and concentrate on sensations in your body while taking each breath. Further, and in conjunction with your breathing, you should focus on the muscle groups of your body where you feel tense.
- Inhale through your nose into your abdomen, so that your stomach muscles and abdominal membrane spreads (like a balloon), and then let the air fill and expand the central upper chest. You may stop inhaling when you no longer feel comfortable taking air.
- As you exhale, tighten your stomach muscles and the air should be pushed out through your stomach and mouth. Imagine that you are emptying the air from the balloon. Associate each exhale with your key word for relaxation (i.e. relax, calm, smooth, easy, float). Exhale until you cannot comfortably continue to breathe out.
- Breathe smoothly and comfortably repeating your key relaxing word. With each breath you will feel more relaxed and comfortable with your body. Pay attention to the sensation in your body while you inhale and exhale. Try to only concentrate on your breathing rhythm and body sensations. Remind yourself that you will feel as relaxed and alert as you want to be for the next task.
- Continue this exercise for about 5 to 10 minutes.

You will find out that as you breathe in this way, you will quite naturally come to be comfortable, relaxed and calm.

EXERCISE 2: SHORT RELAXATION BREATHING – THREE BREATHS TECHNIQUE

In a situation where you do not have much time for prolonged relaxation techniques, this short breathing exercise can help you to relax quickly and effectively.

- Breathe in and count to three. Then allow your neck and shoulders to relax as you breathe out while counting up to six. Use your key relaxation word (i.e. calm).
- Breathe in and count up to three. Then allow your abdomen and back muscles to relax as you breathe out while counting up to six. Use your key relaxation word (i.e. relax).
- Breathe in and count up to three. Then allow your whole body to relax as you breathe out while counting up to six. Use your key relaxation word (i.e. calm).

For example, you may feel some tension in your shoulders and arms areas. While breathing use the relaxation rhythm breathing with a prolonged exhaling breath. As you breathe out allow your shoulders and arms to relax by saying one of your cue relaxing words.

EXERCISE 3: PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION (PMR)

The purpose of PMR is to help individuals to develop an awareness of the difference between tension and relaxation, and how to let go of this tension.

- Tense all the muscles in the neck area (while you breathe in) and hold it for a few seconds.
- Then gradually start releasing the tension (while you breathe out). Repeat this twice.
- Pay attention to the contrast between tensed and relaxed muscles and be aware of the feeling when your muscle area is relaxed.
- Then repeat this with other muscle groups in your body.

EXERCISE 4: RELAXATIONAL AND ACTIVATIONAL SELF-TALK

You can create or change your arousal level by controlling your thoughts through self-talk. To use self-talk to create or change your mood and arousal level you need to find an appropriate phrase or key (cue) word as a trigger. Triggers in conjunction with breathing and/or imagery can be very effective to control arousal levels.

- To calm down and relax you can try to use this trigger words: calm, relax, loose, chill, breathe deeply, or any word or phrase that you can associate with the relaxed feeling.
- To psych you up and activate you can try using this trigger words: action, focus, ready, go, move, search, or any word or phrase that you associate with a high energy feeling.

EXERCISE 5: "PEACEFUL PLACE" IMAGERY SCRIPT

In imagery relaxation you imagine taking a mini vacation to a place where you feel relaxed and comfortable – "peaceful place" script. The more you can transport yourself into that special place, the more relaxed you will be.

- Sit comfortable, close your eyes and start with the abdominal breathing. Find your relaxation rhythm and concentrate on every breath.
- Allow your eyes and face muscles to relax. Concentrate on your relaxation breathing and be aware of your relaxation through your entire body.
- Now, imagine your favourite peaceful place, when you feel relaxed and calm (i.e. riverside, white sand beach, mountain, forest, etc.).
- Recall the feeling of relaxation when you are at that place. Allow yourself to drift back to that place and immerse yourself in it once more.

EXERCISE 6: ACTIVATION IMAGERY SCRIPT

- Sit comfortable, close your eyes and start with the abdominal breathing. Find your optimal activation rhythm and concentrate on every breath.
- Then think back to a situation where your arousal state was optimal and produced a great performance.
- Recall precise states that led you to that arousal level (i.e. focused, under control, full of self-belief, prepared and ready).
- Recall a specific situation during the game when your performance was at the peak.
- Capture that sensation with the key word, image or feeling and use it every time when you feel that you need to increase your arousal level.

EXERCISE 7: ACTIVATIONAL BREATHING

Activation breathing rhythm means that your exhalation interval is the same (or one interval longer) than inhalation interval. I.e. if your inhalation interval is 3 seconds, then your exhalation interval is 3-4 seconds. Usual activation breathing rhythms are: 2:2, 3:3, 3:4, 4:4, and 4:5.

- Inhale through your nose into your abdomen, so that your stomach muscles and abdominal membrane spread (like a balloon), and then let the air fill and expand the central upper chest. You may stop inhaling when you can no longer take in air comfortably.
- As you exhale, tighten your stomach muscles and the air should be pushed out through your stomach and mouth. Imagine that you are emptying the air from the balloon. Exhale until you can no longer continue to breathe out comfortably.
- Continue this exercise for about 1 minute.

Short activation breathing (2 – 3 breaths) can help you feel strong, focused, and ready for the action.



SELF – TALK

CHAPTER 4: SELF-TALK

When you think about something and have an **internal dialogue in your mind**, you are actually doing self-talk. Thinking about yourself and saying something to yourself is crucial for your performance. Self-talk can sometimes become a self-fulfilling prophecy; either positive or negative. The more you repeat a thought, the more automatic it becomes, and eventually leads to a belief. It is therefore important to control your self-talk in a way of how you think, what you think about and when you will use it.

Become **AWARE** of the words and phrases that you use.

RECOGNIZE your disorted thinking and irrational beliefs.

CHANGE them into rational and affirmative thoughts and beliefs.

TRIGGER SITUATIONS FOR NEGATIVE SELF-TALK:

- Missing a call
- Doubtful decision
- Listening to coach and players complaining
- Listening to the crowd
- Losing your concentration
- Bad teamwork between co-officials
- Forgetting a rule
- Forgetting the mechanics and the positioning
- Fatigue and tiredness

Positive self-talk, task-oriented, and encouraging will boost your confidence and performance. Negative self-talk, on the other hand, can hurt your confidence, and cause more anxiety and lead to poor performance.

Using **positive / affirmative self-talk** can help you remain focused on the task and the performance at the present moment – **here and now** (Figure 5).

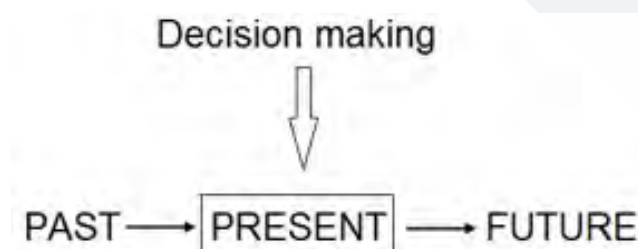


Figure 5. Decision making at the present situation

It is important that you stay focused on the situation “here and now” – the action happening in front of you on the court. That is the time and the place where the decision is made.

Table 4. Non effective self-talk

		THINKING ABOUT		
		NEGATIVE PAST EVENTS	NEGATIVE FUTURE EVENTS	DISTRACTIONS
thoughts		mistakes or bad decisions you had 10 seconds, 2 or 5 minutes ago “How could I do this?” “Why I did not see that contact?” “I made a terrible call!”	what will the consequences be if you do make mistakes “I hope I will not do make a mistake again.” “Will I make it the last two minutes under pressure?”, “What if I blow a big call?”, “What will the observer say after this game?”	thinking about so many things, and paying attention to too many cues, especially the distracting and irrelevant ones crowd, flight time, private life issues
outcome		anxiety starts to increase, attention starts to narrow and directing too internal and you are not able to concentrated on the present action and you’ll probably not be able to make a proper decision	anxiety starts to increase, attention starts to narrow and directing too internal and you are not able to stay concentrated on the present action and you’ll probably not be able to make a proper decision	Attention starts to spread and becomes too broad-external and you are not able to stay concentrated on the present action and you’ll probably not be able to make a proper decision

Many people believe that emotions and behaviour are products of a situation in which you perform, but on the contrary, it is your **interpretation of the situation** that determines your mood, emotions and behavior. How you perceive possible consequences of your performance it is essential. If you start to think that you will fail in this game, you will start to feel anxious, and eventually perform under your abilities.

Generally speaking, each situation can be interpreted as a **CHALLENGE** or a **THREAT**.

Perceiving a situation as threat can lead to some physiological and cognitive changes (i.e. increased heart rate, muscle tension, narrow focus of attention, negative thoughts, etc.). Perceiving a situation as a challenge can give you an additional energy burst and shift your attention towards achieving the goal – managing the challenge.

EXAMPLE 1: If you are nominated to the FIBA U19 World Championship and you will officiate the opening game you may perceive the information as a challenge or threat (Table 5).

Table 5. Situation perception – challenging or threatening

SITUATION / EVENT: Nomination for U19 World Championship perceived as:	
THREAT	or CHALLENGE
<p>THOUGHTS (i.e. "OMG this is so important!", "I cannot make any mistakes!", "What will everyone think if I blow up at the opening game?")</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>REACTIONS <i>(emotional, physiological, behavioural)</i></p> <p>Anxiety and fear Self-doubt Confidence loss Increased heart rate and breathing rhythm Choking Narrowed attention</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>PERFORMANCE Poor</p>	<p>THOUGHTS (i.e. I earned this nomination due to my great officiating during the last two seasons. I will physically and mentally prepare for this event. I will try to do my best when once there!")</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>REACTIONS <i>(emotional, physiological, behavioural)</i></p> <p>Pride Excitement Optimal heart rate and breathing rhythm Calm and ready Confident Proper attention shifting and re-focusing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>PERFORMANCE Good</p>

CHANGING NEGATIVE SELF-TALK TO POSITIVE SELF-TALK

When you become aware of your negative thoughts and inappropriate self-talk, it is important that you change them into positive and affirmative ones (Table 6). You can do this by using a thought stopping and solution mode thinking!

Self-talk should be affirmative in the direction of what you want to do, not what you don't want to do. For example, instead of saying "I don't want to make any mistakes" you should say "I am prepared to do my best.", "I will pay attention to my AoR and be ready for the decision".

Table 6. Changing negative self-talk to positive self-talk.

Negative self-talk	Positive self-talk
That was a terrible call	It can happen to anyone
I will mess up with the mechanics	Search for the best position to see the action
I cannot make any mistake	I am prepared to do my best
If I do a mistake everyone will think that I am a bad referee	I am not in control of others. I am in control of my performance and will concentrate on that
I hate how I feel when he starts to provoke me	Keep calm - take a deep breath and regain control
I can't make any mistake in the last two minutes!	Last two minutes I will keep my concentration at the highest level
I will never be a top referee	I can make it if I set my goals properly, step by step, and continue to work hard.
Nothing is happening at my AoR. When will I make a call?	Wait, be patient, follow the action focus on my AoR!

TRIGGERS

The term trigger indicates a word, action, phrase, or stimulus that reminds you to stay relaxed, calm and focused in a particular situation. Triggers can be something general or something very personal for you that will help you in some particular situations (Table 7). The more the trigger is personalized,

the more effect it will have on your concentration, your task orientation and it will reinforce your performance.

Table 7. Triggers

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES	i.e. relax, calm down, focus, pay attention, move, control, wait, be ready, search, re-focus, etc.
SIGNALS AND SIGNS	i.e. red stop signal, green light, blue arrow, etc.
ACTIONS OR STIMULATIONS	i.e. pinch on a leg, snapping fingers, touch on the belt, eye contact with co-officials, etc.

EXERCISE 1: CONTROLLING SELF-TALK

In order to change negative thoughts into more constructive and positive ones, it is important to:

- Become aware and recognize a negative thought or self-talk (i.e. "This was a bad decision. How could I make such a mistake? I am a really bad referee")
- Stop and interrupt negative thought with a trigger or physical action (i.e. red stop signal, touch the belt, pinch yourself)
- Regain control with 1-2 breaths

Use the affirmative self-talk (i.e. "Ok, this was a bad decision, but for now I will put it in the "pocket", and analyse it after the game. Stay focused on the action in front of you! Search for the best position to make a best possible decision!")

By doing this you will tell yourself that you did make a mistake but you will think about it after the game. Also, you shift your attention to present action and task oriented thinking!

EXERCISE 2: SOLUTION MODE THINKING

For each worry and possible problem situation create a possible solution.

- What is the problem situation? i.e. "Coach A usually starts to provoke me."
- What can I do and how can I properly react? i.e. "I will stay calm and concentrated on the action on the court. If he starts to be too rude, I will give him a warning."

By doing this, you give yourself directions and regain control.

This kind of thinking requires that in any problem situation you set your mind to solution mode. If we start to think that everything is going to be perfect and that there will be no problems during the game, this will not be productive nor effective, as we do not know that for sure, as we cannot predict events. What can we do is to prepare for some problem situations that can usually occur during the game (more about preparation for the game in Chapter 6).



VISUALISATION AND IMAGERY

CHAPTER 5: VISUALISATION AND IMAGERY

You may not have realized it, but you've probably already used imagery in your life – when you thinking about a game you will officiate, when you remembering the great performance you had the day before, the good communication with colleagues, the firm signal showing, and so on.

VISUALIZATION refers to only “picturing or seeing” something in your mind, where **IMAGERY** refers to using of **all senses** – sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste, and movement, as well as thoughts, emotions, and reactions. Images of some situations can be very vivid and can evoke many feelings and mood states (e.g. fear, anxiety, happiness, pride, confidence, etc.). The more you can control imagination, the more you can expect to control your performance.

Table 8. Imagery

IMAGERY SCENARIO	
Skills development, rehearsal and mastering Signals presentation Mechanics and positioning Emotional and behavioural control Game management Specific situations Problem solving	
IMAGERY PERSPECTIVE	
INTERNAL imagining yourself performing from your own eye perspective, like being inside your body and experiencing those images and sensations which you usually experience when performing in the actual situation.	EXTERNAL imagining yourself performing from outside perspective, like you see yourself on TV, or from camera view – looking at yourself from outside.
IMAGERY SPEED	
SLOW MOTION usually used for problem solving situations and learning new skills or movements in mechanics. E.g. If you are learning new signal presentation or new mechanics movement, start in slow motion (until you improve and learn it) and eventually move to real time imagining.	REAL TIME used for mastering and coordinating skills into complete performance. E.g. imagining the game situation of post play and required movements and positioning during that action.

It is important that your imagery is **vivid, clear and controllable**. When you are imagining specific situation scenarios you should detail it as much as you can.

Using imagery as a coping technique helps you anticipate potential problems (e.g. distractions, negative emotions, possible mistakes, etc.) and refocusing to solutions and next actions after their occurrence. You can use **solution mode scenarios** for some specific situation you usually have problems (e.g. difficult coach behaviour, loosing concentration after first mistake). Imagery with the positive and solution mode scenario cannot guarantee a good result but it make it more likely. You will probably be most controllable over some situations if you rehearse them also through imagery.

Imagery can be effective as a supplement rather than a replacement for real situation practice, but it can also be used when you are not able to practice physically due to fatigue, injury, or lack of nominations.

Table 9. Imagery before, during and after the game

BEFORE THE GAME	DURING THE GAME	AFTER THE GAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to improve your skills or mechanics, ▪ to prepare for game characteristics (team characteristics, player style of play, coach behaviour, etc.) ▪ for specific situations that may occur ▪ on the game day to recreate a key signals ▪ to control your arousal state. <p>Using imagery for preparation can increase your odds of successful performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ during the time outs or other short breaks ▪ for next task or action required for the next situation. ▪ recall the situation that happened before ▪ situation that is likely to occur when the time starts <p>(e.g. player control, preparing for new team strategy, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ you create a replay of your performance and ▪ helps you recall the good aspects and memorize them ▪ helps you recall and visually change bad decisions and search areas of improvement <p>Effective way to analyse and review your performance.</p>

IMAGERY EXERCISES

When you start to use imagery technique make sure that you are not too tired or sleepy. Make yourself comfortable at some quiet and private place. Sit in a comfortable position and gently close your eyes, and focus on your breathing pattern. Find your breathing rhythm that is comfortable and try to control it. Repeat breathing with five to ten breaths and switch your focus to imagining a specific situation you want to rehearse.

EXERCISE 1: MANAGING A DIFFICULT SITUATION – PROBLEM SOLVING

- Find yourself a quiet and private place with no distractions.
- Start your imagery exercise with breathing rhythm that is most comfortable for you. After you manage to direct your attention to breathing prepare yourself for the next move – imagining scenario of a situation that usually gives you trouble.
- Go through the situation like you usually do and find what is that you doing wrong.
- Then think about the best possible solution for that situation and try to imagine doing it like that. See, hear and feel your proper response to this situation.
- Repeat it 2-3 times and always try to retain the image of what you want to do.

EXERCISE 2: ROLE MODEL WATCHING

- Search for a video record or clip with the performance of your favourite role models in officiating.
- Focus on their mechanics movements, body presentation and game control skills that you would like to add to your presentation. Watch them performing a particular move or reaction and repeat it several times.
- Then try to repeat that same movement imagining yourself doing it on the court. First, you can do it from external point of view watching yourself from the outside (camera view). Then, you can try it from internal point of view (eye perspective).

EXERCISE 3: IMAGINING DESIRED OUTCOME

- Find yourself a quiet and private place with no distractions.
- Start your imagery exercise with breathing rhythm that is most comfortable for you. Concentrate on controlling your breathing and repeat it several times until you become ready to start the imagery.
- Mentally rehearse a play or action first in slow-motion and then gradually faster to the real-time speed. Execute every movement and decision successfully, and fully anticipate what is going on during the action.
- Then practice the same action under various circumstances to ensure that you are adopt it appropriately.
- Focus on making sure that your movements are fluid and lead you to desired outcome.



**FACING STRESSFUL
& CHALLENGING
SITUATIONS**

CHAPTER 6: FACING STRESSFUL & CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

When we experience a stressful situation it can trigger negative and catastrophic thinking, causing you to become concerned and fearful. It is a normal human reaction but we should not allow these feelings to prevail and occupy us. Thinking about bad and catastrophic consequences leads to fear and anxiety, which blocks our creativity, resourcefulness, and the ability to search for solutions.

When we become aware of our negative thoughts and feelings, it is important to take a step back and learn how to cope with this negative emotional state. **By our nature, we are resourceful and adaptive.** We are able to cope with various stressors and uncertainty but we need to learn how to use them. In stressful situations, we should (as fast as we can) **activate our resources, solution-mode thinking, and recall the strengths we have.**

EXAMPLE 1: During your career, you may experience many stressful situations that can have a greater impact on your performance, mental state, and general well-being. Injury in the middle of the season, an official complaint from one team after the game, sent home from the tournament after 'big' mistakes, losing a job, or some personal life issues, etc. are just a few examples that you may or you already have experienced during your officiating career. Once you have experienced them it may seem that it is 'over for you' or that something catastrophic will happen in the future. It may seem like that, but remember you are able to face this with many strengths and inner resources you have. In these situations you should focus on your ability to adapt and activate your flexible, creative, solution-mode thinking style: "What can I do in this situation?", "What options and solutions do I have?", "Which actions should I take?", "Which skills and strategies should I use?"

As we go through life we experience 'highs and lows'. It is particularly in the low spots where we find out what are we made of. When you face big problems and experience the process of overcoming them, then you become more resourceful and stronger than you've thought you could ever be because you know – 'you survived'!

There are many ways to efficiently cope with stressful situations but here are presented only a few general guidelines on how to face stressful long term challenges.

FOCUS ON SOLUTIONS

- Stay focused on solutions, tasks, actions, and creativity!
- Active coping is an adaptive way of dealing with stressful events. That's why it's essential that we focus our energy on what matters most to us.
- Ask yourself, "What can I do to stay strong and proactive?" The answer to this question will help you make priorities and define what is important to you. "I choose where I am going to put my attention. I choose what am I going to do, and what actions will I take!"

EXERCISE 1: ACTIVE COPING

Active coping refers to strategies that are directed at problem-solving to deal with a stressor and to reduce its effects. People who engage in active coping rely upon their own resources, skills, and strategies to deal with a specific situation.

- First, identify things under your control in this specific stressful situation. Things that are under your control include your effort and attitude, your reactions and responses, your behaviour and actions you take.
- Second, identify things that are not under your control in this specific stressful situation.
- Third, think about and write down the actions you are going to take! Actions that are fully within your power, that are specific and effective. Think about what resources, specific skills, supports, strategies you have and how can you include them to actively cope with this situation.
- "What solutions do I have?", "What skills and strategies can I use?", "What specific actions am I going to take?"

Include actions like problem-solving techniques, investing more effort in one area, re-framing the meaning of the problem, learning a new skill, improving your knowledge on some topic, redefining your values, and many other specific actions and activities.

CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLE

- Recognize the things you can always control and use them effectively.
- Many circumstances in our life are out of our control. There are limits to personal control in some situations, but our response and attitude certainly are controllable.
- In situations of stress, the only way to enhance personal control is to deal with the emotions that result from this experience, reframe the meaning of the situation and engage in some activities to cope with the consequences.
- Remember, you are in control of your effort, attitude, actions, and emotions, your strength is in your ability to manage the way you respond to what is happening around you.

FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE THINKING & CONSTRUCTIVE SELF-TALK

- Practice activating your flexible and creative thinking. Be creative and innovative in a way how you think, behave and what can you do. Choose self-talk that is inspiring, constructive, and productive!
- Try to keep your thoughts and self-talk positive and avoid the habits that lead to negativity and unhealthy behaviours. Tell yourself: "I want to focus on my desires, my tasks, my responsibilities, not on my fears."
- Remind yourself that the fear comes from a primitive part of your brain that wants to take over. Scan fearful thought so you can look at it in a rational manner. It is not easy to think well under challenging and novel situations, but it is important to try and repeat it.
- Learn how to become more agile in your thinking and prepare for all possible outcomes. Ask yourself, "What is the worst that can happen?" It is not pessimism, it is a powerful question because it prepares you for the worst so you can think and plan how you could handle it. This question challenges us to look at all possibilities we have and those that we can create. When we do so, we expand our ability to cope and adapt to different stressful situations, making them look more manageable.

EXERCISE 2: "WHAT IF ... ?" SCENARIO

When we tell ourselves "What if something bad happens?" we often identify the potential danger. Each time we do this there are many positive possibilities. Yet, we fail to see them because fear blocks our creativity and innovation. If we primarily see bad possibilities and not the good ones, we develop an unbalanced and unrealistic view of the situation. Therefore, try to come up with at least three possible solutions for each negative consequence.

- Ask yourself about the consequences: "What if something terrible happens?", "What if all goes wrong?", "What if I get sick/injured?", "What if I lose my job?"
- Ask yourself about possible solutions: "Did anything similar happen before? How did I cope with it?", "Do I have any other options or solutions?", "Who could I call on to help me get through it?", "What resources, skills, and abilities would be helpful to me if this happened?", "What would a friend tell me about my worry?", "What can I do that is under my control?"

By simply thinking through the likelihood and possible outcomes of a catastrophe may help you to decrease the anxiety towards the potential situation you are fixed on.

This kind of thinking requires to set the mind into a solution-oriented mode in any problematic situation. If we start thinking that everything is going to be perfect and there will be no problems or consequences afterward, this will definitely not be a productive or effective way of thinking. We do not know for sure what the future holds. Similarly, we cannot predict events. What we can do, however, is to take actions we can and prepare for the future. By doing so, we give ourselves directions and stay mentally strong.

RECALL YOUR STRENGTHS

- Identify the strengths, skills, and abilities you already possess that could be beneficial to face this situation.
- Think about the similar situation you had experienced before and the way you have overcome it. "How did I face similar situations before?, Do I have another solution/idea?"

EXERCISE 3: REBUILD YOUR STRENGTHS

MY STRENGTHS

- Think about and write down the strengths you already possess.

NEW EXPERIENCE

- Think about and write down the strengths you think you will gain (or you are already developing) by experiencing this specific situation? For example, injury in the middle of the season, an official complaint from one team after the game, sent home from tournament after 'big' mistakes, losing a job, personal life issues, etc.

HOW IT WILL BE VALUABLE IN THE FUTURE? WHAT HAVE I LEARNED FROM IT?

- Which skills and experiences you have gained from overcoming these situations will be useful for you in the future? How this new experience will be valuable in the officiating environment? What are the 'new strengths' you will gain/ you have gained experiencing this situation?

Remind yourself of strengths and competencies, on how you are resourceful and adaptive. How valuable experience you have as a referee as you manage to face many stressful situations and challenges during a season and even during a single game. This insight will help you to face other different stressful situations.

MENTAL STRENGTH DURING INJURY AND RECOVERY



CHAPTER 7: MENTAL STRENGTH DURING INJURY AND RECOVERY

Injury is something that many referees don't like to talk about for the fear that acknowledging the very real risk of an injury during their career will make it more likely to occur. However, one of the worst things that you can do is to not prepare yourself for this possibility, because many of you already have had or will experience some kind of injury. It can put you out of the court just for a day or few, but sometimes can take you out for a few months or even longer. The more you become aware of the possibility of injuries, the better you'll be prepared for their prevention.

Here are the basic principles of injury prevention:

Understand the injury risks in officiating.
(What type of injuries usually may occur?)

Learn how to prevent those injuries with required actions
(i.e. proper nutrition, exercises, lifestyle, etc.)

Know your body and be honest with yourself.
(i.e. recognize when to hold back and when to push in training, when to go to sleep, how long to rest, etc.)

While accidental injuries do occur, the vast majority of sports injuries can be traced back to a failure to these three basic principles. Think of when you were injured, and what had led to your injury (i.e. overtraining, bad preparation, inadequate lifestyle, short rest time, etc.).

Depending on the severity of injuries **you may require assistance** by different professionals (medical, physical, psychological) to ensure an appropriate healing and recovery process. Since we are talking about the psychological view of rehabilitation, the big part is **controlling what you can control** and trying to minimize anxiety about uncontrollable factors. Here is the plan that provides you with the tips how you can address the challenge. Apply the steps individually and take action.

1. LEARN ABOUT YOUR INJURY AND RECOVERY PROCESS

Learn about your injury, its cause, the healing process, and what it will look like when it is healed. Proactive education about injury and rehabilitation is the cornerstone of a successful recovery. Understanding "how" the injury happened, "what" and "why" is necessary during the rehabilitation. It empowers you and gives you a sense of controllability of the whole process.

2. GOAL-SETTING

Realistic short-term and mid-term goals guide you through a day-to-day and step-by-step process of rehabilitation. It gives you the motivation to focus on the right things, at the right time, in the right way. The challenge of rehabilitation demands a consistent, task-oriented focus through the whole process of rehabilitation. The better your goals are set - realistically and under control, the more successful will be your recovery.

3. MENTAL TOUGHNESS

The ability to remain positive, determined and focused when you are tired, in pain, and discouraged is mental toughness. Overcoming inevitable obstacles and challenges during your recovery process demands you to be focused on what you can control – your thoughts, emotions, and actions (behaviour). Overcoming and changing negative emotions, such as fear, frustration, anger and despair with positive and affirmative ones, such as optimism and hope could be essential for your rehabilitation.

EXERCISE 1: TAKE ACTION

Find something you can think about (rather than not to think about your injury). Find your motivation for your areas of improvement – i.e. daily tasks, reading the rule book, doing different video analysis, etc.

- Set daily goals and a check list for each task you need to complete during your day-to-day therapy. Write down your progress and evaluate each new step.
- Every day take 45 minutes to go through the rule book and recall the rules' applications with the images from the court and/or video clips.
- On weekends, while your colleagues officiate, watch some live games and make an analysis from the educational point of view. Use specific situations in the games to learn from them and to prepare for similar situations that may occur when you get back on the court. (i.e. prepare how to handle game control in "derby games" or find solutions for a better control of specific coaches' or players' behaviour).

Do your best to stay well prepared and in touch with officiating:

- Use this time as an opportunity to learn something new and master it.
- Upgrade your English (the official FIBA language).
- Read the FIBA rulebook and the interpretations, as well as the modifications
- Contact your mentor (or colleagues) to discuss officiating and interesting clips from the games.

The most beneficial psychological techniques that can help you to stay mentally strong during the rehabilitation process are relaxation, self-talk and imagery.

- **Relaxation techniques** such as abdominal slow breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and music with low tempo can help you learn how to voluntarily decrease the amount of tension in your muscles, calm your mind, and decrease automatic responses (heart rate and blood pressure).
- **Positive self-talk** is a method to change your inner monologue or narrative to a positive and affirmative one. Especially during the injury recovery, positive self-talk is suggested to improve the recovery time. The people with the positive mindset recovered faster after the injury compared to those with a more negative mindset. Techniques of positive self-talk, that have an impact on your confidence and the recovery from injury, include phrases, statements and words you can repeat to yourself.
- **Imagery technique** can be highly useful and effective for the healing purposes. It can accelerate the recovery by helping you to deal with pain, reducing anxiety, increasing rehab motivation and therefore staying mentally strong during the whole recovery process. Healing imagery has proved effective in stimulating muscle activity, blood flow and helping creation of a positive mindset.

EXERCISE 2: POSITIVE SELF-TALK

Make yourself aware of your negative thoughts and replace them with positive cue words or phrases.

- "Injury that has happened is temporary. Next month I will be on the court again."
- "While I am injured it does not mean that I am having a terrible life or should give up on officiating. I choose to focus on what is going well in my life, on my recovery and the process - as long as it takes to be on the court again."
- "I have control over my thoughts. I can switch from lousy thoughts to my key words and get back to the rehabilitation process."
- "My recovery is going according to the plan. I feel better every day."
- "I will focus on my daily goals and do whatever I can and what is under my control."
- "I take required actions to stay prepared, keeping up with the officiating knowledge and the rules. While I am not able to run and practice, I can do everything else to stay prepared until the start of the physical activity."
- "If there are delays in the scheduled recovery time or disruptions in the healing process, I will be patient and will stay focused on what I can control and do."
- "I will follow the suggestions and tasks provided by my medical support team."

EXERCISE 3: HEALING IMAGERY

Before you start with the imagery, you should know what the injured structures are, what the healing process is like, what step of the healing process you are to take during your rehab, and what the structure should look like when the injury is healed.

- Start your imagery exercise with relaxation breathing rhythm that is most comfortable for you.
- After you manage to direct your attention to breathing and relaxation, start imagining a scenario of your ability to successfully complete rehabilitation task and/or exercise you usually do in the real situation.
- Imagine yourself doing the required therapeutic task and/or exercise correctly and successfully.
- See and feel the injured body part healing and getting better.
- Feel how your healing process is activated and how successful it continues.
- See and feel how your injured body part looks like when it's healed.

EXERCISE 4: VISUALIZATION & IMAGERY

Start your imagery exercise with relaxation breathing rhythm that is most comfortable for you. You can use imagery to:

- Work on your IOT. Practice specific movements, presentation and signalling, and repeat them many times in different imaginary situations.
- Improve your 3PO rotation mechanics and positioning. After watching a clip you can repeat proper rotation by visualizing it.
- Learn and rehearse rules. After you read the rule book and interpretations you can rehearse these situations in many different imaginary scenarios. Be creative.
- Master your communication skills (especially for the situations when communicating with coaches and players).
- Stay on track with the officiating experience. You can recall some interesting games you've had and experience it again. Firstly by watching it and later by visualizing the most educational situations you had in the game.
- Build up your self-confidence. You can recall the best game or the best tournament you've had and experience it again. Firstly by watching the game video, and later – in visualization.

Social support is also a very important part of your rehabilitation process. Many people you associate with are the source of your social support. Usually, they are members of your family, your friends and colleagues, even sport medicine professionals working with you. They can be very helpful providing you emotional and motivational support, personal and medical assistance, encouraging you to overcome various obstacles and challenges during the whole process.

RETURN TO OFFICIATING – READY TO STEP ON THE COURT

The rehabilitation process has come to an end and you are ready to step on the court. This stage often presents an emotional dynamic of fear and relief. Fear of reinjury is the most common emotional response. When a person ruminates or is obsessed about his/her full recovery status, the feeling of fear may create an inhibition in rehabilitation, or perhaps even questions doubting his/her abilities. It is important to stay focused on the present moment of performance and the objective factors that the recovery is finished and you are fine.

“I am ready to officiate again.”



**KEEPING MOTIVATION,
PASSION AND
ENTHUSIASM FOR
OFFICIATING**

CHAPTER 8: KEEPING MOTIVATION, PASSION AND ENTHUSIASM FOR OFFICIATING

Motivation is a drive to engage in an activity, it is an ability to act. It includes energy, action, direction, persistence and **determination toward a goal**. On one hand, it moves us to engage in needed activities when the times are difficult, demanding and hard. On the other hand, it keeps us staying focused and determined when everything goes well and according to the plan.

During life in general and the career in particular **we experience both, highs and lows**. There are times when you feel highly motivated and times you are struggling to motivate yourself. You may feel that after some time you have lost your passion for officiating and you are unmotivated to go to basketball games. You feel the lack of energy, the loss of purpose and direction.

It is important to understand that almost everyone, time by time, can feel unmotivated and passive in their career. When you show no interest to be involved, take action and engage in something you usually were doing previously. This might be a significant method of detecting why you have lost your motivation. When you become aware of your low motivation and disengagement, you should ask yourself "How long am I feeling like this?" and "What are the reasons that make me feel like this?" In other words, "**When**" and "**Why**" have I lost my passion for officiating?

Sometimes, this may occur during the period of long rehabilitation after a severe injury or some life changing factors affecting your personal life. At other times it can be just a result of the routine, repeating same things automatically all over gain. It is well known that enthusiasm can be lost when surroundings, people and tasks we deal with often or even daily become so familiar and comfortable that we **stop noticing an interesting diversity**.

EXAMPLE: After officiating at the same level for many years, you start to realize you don't feel any passion when going to the games. You officiate each game in your comfort zone, doing it automatically, not changing anything in your performance for years. You even start skipping your individual preparation before the game and the post-game analysis after the game. You feel like you are just doing this without any emotional connection toward officiating and the basketball game.

When feeling like this, you should understand what is behind your job? What is behind the officiating? What is your role? What is your purpose as a referee? Why are you officiating in the first place?

Find a purpose

Meaningful careers can emerge when you find a connection between your purpose and the role you play while doing your job. Finding real purpose makes you willing to prepare and work harder, be more focused and officiate with greater passion.

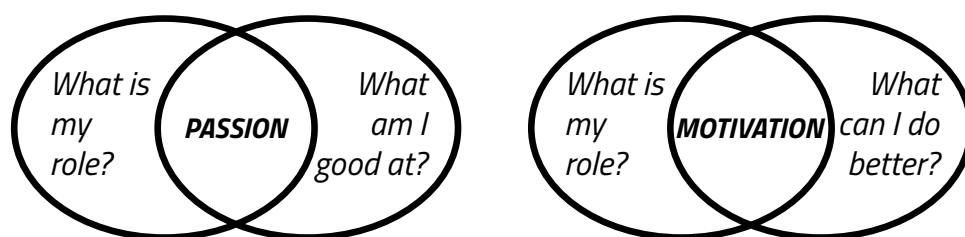
REFLECT ON YOUR ROLE

What is your role as a referee?
What are your responsibilities?
What are your duties?

REFLECT ON YOUR ABILITIES

What are your abilities as a referee?
What do you do great?
What are your strengths?

When you think about the role you have as a referee and what you are good at while playing this role, you will understand your passion for officiating. It is something that keeps you going even when the obstacles occur. It helps you to prepare for difficult games, all the stress around when ensuring the competitions are safe and fair. And, in general, all the challenging parts of being a referee. On the other hand, it's worth looking into possibilities and finding what you could (and should) do better while officiating. This can become your new goal and a new challenge during the difficult period of your career, helping you stay motivated, focused and prepared.



Having a sense of purpose also contributes to the focus on intrinsic goals such as personal growth and accomplishment, as opposed to only external pursuits like money and status. Working toward intrinsic goals increases your self-confidence, which helps you dealing with many challenges along the way.

Revise your goals and seek a new challenge

Maybe it's time to revise your goals and take control over your future by creating an action plan. Concentrate on what could be your new challenge and set yourself a new goal. It can motivate you to break your routine (to go out from your comfort zone) and elevate your performance to the next level.

Imagine your legacy

Think about the impact you're making as a referee. Take a step back and take a look at the impact you have had on your colleagues and on your profession in general. Consider your impact and acknowledge your contributions. How have you made a difference? Then look at the future and ask yourself "How can I leverage my past accomplishments to create even greater impact in the future?" Visualize the impression you'd like to create.

Become a mentor

If you are an experienced referee probably many young referees would like to learn from you. Another good way to staying motivated for the officiating is to become a mentor for younger referees. You will see the officiating through a beginner's mind. This can remind you why do you love the officiating in the first place. Also, you will feel useful, active and open for new perspectives again.

Look for a mentor

If you are a young referee from a “small basketball country” with only few colleagues around you, maybe you could search for a more experienced referee from whom you would like to learn. It will help you to stay motivated and to find some new goals and areas for improvement. This way you will put some new challenges in front of you.

EXERCISE 1: RELIGHT THE SPARK

- Think about what made you excited to start officiating in the first place?
- Make a list of things you loved about being a referee when you were at the beginning of your career?
- Determine what has changed during the time?
- Pick a few lists of the things that gave you energy and build activities around them for your preparation.
- Remind yourself why you are a referee.



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