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Message from the
Chief of Sport Performance
Alan Ashley



Happy New Year! With the start of 2014 we are in the final run up to the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Sochi. The Team Behind the Team has been supporting our athletes and coaches for years leading into these Games and we're hopeful that we've supported and prepared our athletes for them to realize their Olympic and Paralympic dreams.

It was exciting to watch the Trials and now to see our full Team USA announced recently. We're excited to be sending the largest Olympic Winter Games athlete delegation of any nation of all time and to have our athletes competing in 94 of the 98 medal opportunity events.

Sochi will debut twelve new events that will surely be popular with our fans, including Ski Halfpipe, Women's Ski Jumping, Biathlon Mixed Relay, Luge Relay, and Team Figure Skating. Team USA athletes have a great chance to make a fantastic debut for these exciting new additions to the Games.

This issue of *Olympic Coach* includes some interesting information pertaining to Sochi and Rio preparations, including an interview with our Chief Medical Officer Dr. Gloria Beim and a tactical approach at attempting to best Great Britain's David Weir in the T54 800 meters. Authors also look deeper at the question of whether or not elite athletes transition to elite coaches.

We hope you'll join us in cheering on Team USA at the Olympic Games February 6 through 23 and the Paralympic Games March 7 through 16. NBC will be airing coverage of the Games – visit www.NBCOlympics.com to view the full schedule and set your alarm for live coverage from Sochi!

Winning Gold in the T54 800M (or, Defeating David Weir, If That's Possible...)

**David Kirk, Track & Field Coordinator / Distance Coach
Chagrin Falls High School (Ohio)**

Introduction

At the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, David Weir will only be 37 years old and must still be considered a major force in Paralympic distance racing and a medal favorite for Great Britain. His victories at the London 2012 Paralympic Games showed a range of speed and endurance unmatched on the world scene. Challengers to his titles have much work ahead of them over the next four years if they hope to wear gold around their necks in Rio. The purpose of this article is not about how to beat David Weir as much as it is to seek a better understanding of the times and the pacing it may take to achieve Paralympic gold medals in the distance events.

This article will focus on the 800M for a couple of reasons, not the least of which is that the event is my personal favorite having raced this distance both in high school and college. From a coaching philosophy standpoint, we try to coach our team “up the middle,” with our focus on the 400M and 800M events. This approach to team building allows us versatility in racing at the end of the year as we move our “speed” 800M athletes down to the 400M, and our “distance” 800M people up to the 1600M as needed or as a championship qualifying opportunity presents itself. Individuals in the 400M, 800M, 1600M, and 4 x 800M and 4 x 400M relay teams have been the mainstays of our state championship appearances with over 100 athletes qualifying and 42 of those earning All-Ohio performances. Additionally, over the past few years, our 4 x 800M relay teams have qualified to the outdoor national championships on two occasions. “Good up the middle” always yields a strong team.

The past three years have presented the opportunity for me to work with adapted sport athletes from surrounding high schools, and to be a part of the integration of wheelchair events into the state championships in Ohio. I have had the privilege of meeting the coaching staff and athletes of the U.S. Paralympic Team as well as working with their support personnel to help raise awareness of the competitive abilities of adaptive sport athletes at the state and national level. Paralympic sport participation in every sport, not only track & field, is here to stay. For me as a coach, this means more opportunities to help athletes unlock their potential and enjoy the same success I have experienced over the past quarter-century of my career.

However, coaching wheelchair athletes in the 800M takes a much different approach in laying out the goals, benchmarks, and training regimens versus those of an able-bodied runner. Understanding the differences is the key to teaching the new generation of Paralympic hopefuls what it will take to get close enough to “trade paint” with David Weir. He is the focus of this article because he is the best.



Some Pacing Insights: The Speed of These Racers

For starters – these guys are fast! David Weir's known personal records (PR's) versus the world records in the running events highlight the need for the running coach who is transitioning to Paralympic coaching to think faster (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: David Weir versus the World

Event	Weir's PR	M/SEC	World Record	M/SEC
400M	:46.02	8.69	:43.18	9.26
800M	1:32.66	8.63	1:41.09	7.91
1500M	2:55.25	8.56	3:26.00	7.28
5000M	9:53.15	8.43	12:37.35	6.60
Marathon	1:26.00	8.18	2:03.59	5.69
Source: Compiled using results from http://www.paralympic.org/athletes/results World records: http://www.trackandfieldnews.com/tfn/records/records.jsp				

For wheelchair racing, everything above the 400 is done at a speed much faster than anything a running coach is used to considering when formulating workouts. Couple this awareness with the appreciation of these athletes' ability to hold that top end (400M) pace across the distance spectrum. Weir's PR's show an incredible ability to maintain this constant pace across time with only a 5.87 percent drop in speed from the 400 through the marathon versus a 38.55 percent drop across the same range of running event world records. Where pace awareness must be taught and constantly reinforced with runners, the development of top end speed amongst wheelchair racers seems to be of a greater priority with the emphasis in practice focused on the efficiency and consistency of the stroke mechanics of the racer. The development of endurance capacity will be mirrored between runners and wheelers, however, the speed elements of a wheelchair athlete's workout will hardly vary regardless of the energy system considerations of the event's duration.

Weir's ability to hit a near-maximum speed and hold that pace would seem to indicate an incredible efficiency of stroke and his ability to generate considerable bursts of speed. This is best illustrated through a film analysis of his 800M gold medal race, when he arguably may have covered the backstretch gap from the 500M to the 600M in under ten seconds. Therefore, as a coach or athlete new to Paralympic competition approaches their workout, the benefits from "proper" work versus those of "hard" work cannot be underestimated.

The adage, "First you form habits, then they form you" seems to be an important consideration to every aspect of the wheelchair racer's practice session with the emphasis constantly on form and technique.

The 800M Splits

Weir's PR's in the short sprints also seems to indicate the need to rethink how we approach the splits in the 800M (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: David Weir and the Short Sprints

Event	Weir's PR	M/SEC	World Record	M/SEC
100M	:14.66	6.82	:9.58	10.44
200M	:25.96	7.70	:19.19	10.42
400M	:46.02	8.69	:43.18	9.26
Source: Compiled using results from http://www.paralympic.org/athletes/results World records: http://www.trackandfieldnews.com/tfn/records/records.jsp				

The general rule of thumb for 800M runners is to take the best 400M time, add four seconds, which becomes the first lap split, and add four more for the second lap split. Thus, a runner with a 400M PR of :48.0 could expect to be able to run a :52 - :56 split combination for a 1:48.0 finish. More experienced runners and, at times, well-conditioned runners who have moved down from races like the 5000M can "three split" the second lap going :52 - :55 for a 1:47.0 final. These are general guidelines for 800M runners, and they provide a starting point to the progression of seasonal training, however, they do not work for wheelchair racers.

Wheelchair racers require the opposite approach to the split tactics. While the speed of running world records tops out at the 100M and 200M measurements before beginning a steady reduction of output with each progressive distance, Weir's short sprint PR's indicate that he is still accelerating through the 400M and then, as previously stated, those paces can be held. What this means to pace work and tactics is a reversal of our conventional approach.

A wheelchair athlete will be slower on the first lap, and the +4 second rule is a fairly good guide as to what that leadoff lap may be. However, the second lap will be closer – and possibly even faster – than their 400M PR. For example, Weir's 400M PR is :46. The expectation of a leadoff lap in :50 and a second lap of :46 for a 1:36.0 finish would be a very reasonable goal. At the same time, we must remember that Weir's PR in the 800M is actually 1:32.66, which even splits at :46.33, only .06 M/Sec slower (0.7 percent) than his 400M PR of :46.02. In timing the video of the London T54 800M, Weir started slower than anticipated in :52.2, but it should be noted that he came blazing back on his second lap at :45.5 – almost one half of a second under his 400M PR. His finishing time of 1:37.63, although slower than the +4/400 PR prediction of 1:36.0, demonstrates the importance of racing from the front tactically as Weir seemed to be frustrated in his attempt to break free of traffic in front of him.

Therefore, in addition to the importance of efficient stroke technique, the importance of top-speed development must also factor into the composition of practice plans and serve as a benchmark of progress made in the training progression.

The Pace it Takes to Qualify

In the London 2012 and Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games, qualifying for the finals took an average of a bronze-medal performance. In an examination of the past four Olympiads, the ability to go fast and to do so on back-to-back days is a must. In the years when athletes advanced through first-round competition and semifinals before reaching the finals (Beijing in 2008 and Sydney in 2000), racers had to compete on three of the four days with a one day of rest between the semis and the finals. In the years when athletes qualified from the first round directly to the finals (London and Athens) racing was done on back-to-back days. An examination of those qualifying times illustrates that times are getting faster, and we have to believe the Rio Games will continue with this trend (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Average time it took to qualify to the next round.

Paralympic Year	Average First Round (Range of Qualifying Time)	Semi-Final Averages (Range of Qualifying Time)
London 2012	1:37.87 (1:37.09 – 1:38.27)	Not Contested
Beijing 2008	1:38.49 (1:36.24 - 1:40.45)	1:36.78 (1:34.27 - 1:40.37)
Athens 2004	1:36.01 (1:34.59 – 1:37.95)	Not Contested
Sydney 2000	1:41.48 (1:40.69 – 1:42.46)	1:40.00 (1:39.17 – 1:40.45)
<i>Source: Compiled using results from http://www.paralympic.org/athletes/results</i>		

Additionally, the broader the range of fast-to-slow qualifying times indicates the degree to which the race was likely a tactical one. Prior to the Beijing Games, there seemed to be a bit of a “sit and kick” mentality that often dominates international competition. However, the wide range of qualifying times and tactical approach to racing did not apply in London, and first-round qualifying efforts went to those who started fast and stayed there. The 1.18 second difference of London’s qualifiers to the finals is the closest spread of any of the qualifying rounds from the past four Paralympic Games.

Training for the qualifying rounds will need to emphasize this “all out” preparation.

And the Pace it Takes to Win!

Once in the finals, it’s all about speed. The final round of the Athens Games indicates the potential of what a gold medal-race could look like, although this has not traditionally been the case. Like their Olympic counterparts, rarely do Paralympians hit world record or even PR performances in the race for the medals. However, as we have already seen, at the Beijing Games (1:36.78) and

the London Games (1:37.87), the average qualifying time would have clinched the bronze medal in that respective final race, so the pace is far from pedestrian. A quick glance at the average medal times demonstrates that the race will be along the lines of the 1:36.0 scenario we have laid out in this article (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Medal Winning Efforts

Paralympic Year	Gold	Silver	Bronze
London 2012	1:37.63	1:37.84	1:38.51
Beijing 2008	1:36.61	1:36.76	1:37.12
Athens 2004	1:32.45	1:32.53	1:32.66
Sydney 2000	1:38.22	1:38.55	1:38.72
Average Times	1:36.23	1:36.42	1:36.75
<i>Source: Compiled using results from http://www.paralympic.org/athletes/results</i>			

With only a half of a second difference on average separating the gold from the bronze medalist, the tactical lessons of staying clear of traffic and the timing of the sprint to the finish line becomes paramount to victory in the final. Racers, no matter Olympics or Paralympics, cannot afford to be pinned on the rail over the last 300M. Maintaining an awareness of the moves made by other athletes will dictate the success at the finish line. Weir's move outside at the 500-meter mark and the sprint he started at that point was devastating to the rest of the field. Nearly half of the racers were unable to or did not react; Konjen was unable to hold the sprint through to the finish, and Hug was unable catch him. It was a well-timed move and masterfully delivered. Anyone hoping to unseat the two-time gold medalist will need to have practiced this tactic of an early burst at the 300M mark prior to arriving at the Rio Games.

Looking Ahead to the Field in Rio

Although 2016 is a long way off and a lot can happen in the course of illness and injury, a look at the incoming field offers some insights into the role of experience at this level of competition. The athletes who will fill the heats of the T54 800M should look familiar to those who watched the London race.

Of the 23 athletes who qualified for the first round of competition, six (26.09%) brought at least one Paralympic experience with them (see Figure 5). For Kurt Fearnley of Australia, the only man at his fourth Olympic Games, the pursuit of a gold medal to go with his two silver medals in 2000 and 2008 may be a stretch, as no man has yet to compete at this level for a fifth time. Marcel Hug of Switzerland is at his third Olympic Games, and he pushed Weir to the finish line, only to be .21 of a second behind in the silver-medal position. One must believe that completing his set of Paralympic medals (he won the bronze medal at the Athens Games) will be on his mind. He may try to be the first man to win the gold medal in his fourth attempt. Choke Yasuoka of Japan also at his third Paralympic Games, struggled to repeat his 2004 gold-medal performance, but a champion's

heart should never be underestimated. The possibility of a last attempt on his part may not be out of reach.

Figure 5. Previous Paralympic experience of London 2012 first round qualifiers

Heat 1					
Rank	Athlete	Nation	Result		Previous
1	Zhang, Lixin	CHN	1:37.54	Q	
2	Casoli, Julien	FRA	1:37.76	Q	Beijing 2008
3	Kim, Gyu Dae	KOR	1:37.90	Q	
4	Cassidy, Josh	CAN	1:38.24	Q	Beijing 2008
5	Sanchez Nava, Fernando	MEX	1:38.82		
6	Higuchi, Masayuki	JPN	1:38.85		
7	Lappin, Jake	AUS	1:41.23		
Heat 2					
Rank	Athlete	Nation	Result		Previous
1	Weir, David	GBR	1:37.09	Q	Beijing 2008
2	Hug, Marcel	SUI	1:38.27	Q	Athens 2004, Beijing 2008
3	Fearnley, Kurt	AUS	1:38.62		Sydney 2000, Athens 2004, Beijing 2008
4	Vahdani, Mohammad	UAE	1:40.38		
5	Gandarilla Fernandez, Pedro	MEX	1:40.84		
6	Hanaoka, Nobukazu	JPN	1:40.94		
7	Chalmers, Ryan	USA	1:45.86		
8	Jarju, Demba	GAM	2:27.88		
Heat 3					
Rank	Athlete	Nation	Result		Previous
1	Konjen, Saichon	THA	1:37.96	Q	
2	Bird, Jordan	USA	1:38.20	Q	
3	Yasuoka, Choke	JPN	1:38.42		Athens 2004, Beijing 2008
4	Valladares, Juan	VEN	1:38.83		
5	Aouadi, Ahmed	TUN	1:38.84		
6	Dupont, Alexandre	CAN	1:39.73		
7	Hong, Sukman	KOR	1:39.88		
8	Velasco Soria, Martin	MEX	1:43.88		
Source: Compiled using results from http://www.paralympic.org/athletes/results					

Four of the eight finalists had previous Paralympic experience, and this was the case for two of the three medalists. However, first timers cannot be taken lightly. Saichon Konjen continued Thailand's impressive streak of international competitors in this event to become the ninth individual from his country to compete in the last four Paralympic Games. He duplicated Prawat Wahoram's 2008 bronze-medal performance. In fact, although experience at the London Games seemed to be of great importance, the reality is that nine of the twelve available medals over the last four Paralympic Games have gone to first-time performers.

With 17 of the 23 participants in London competing at their first Paralympic Games, athletes must anticipate facing a highly experienced and talented field in Rio. This number of potential returnees coupled with the possibility of a handful of new athletes quickly brings us to a number that would force the event to add a semifinal round to the qualification process. Although the mental training aspects of facing such a field will need to be a part of the practice plan, the physical training in preparation of having to race back-to-back days in qualifying rounds has been the pattern from Sydney and Beijing. Following a day off, the athlete must be prepared for the fastest race of his career if he is to earn a place on the podium.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the winner of the Rio 2016 gold medal may need to spend the next two and a half years training to notch a 1:30.00 800M. Based on the conclusions drawn from this survey, top-speed development in the direction of a :43 second 400M may be one of the goals with the idea of a :47 - :43 max speed split required to hit that objective. The possibility of an even split :45 - :45 will be determined by the development of very efficient and powerful stroke mechanics as well as injury-free strength endurance work over this interval between Paralympic Games. However, when looking at the PR's of the men returning for this race, one has to believe that the 1:32.17 world record of Ernst van Dyke (South Africa) is in jeopardy.

As the United States begins the grassroots process of seeking ways to integrate wheelchair athletes into their high school sport programs, not only will the talent pool of athletes from which U.S. Paralympic athletes are drawn grow, but the talent pool of highly qualified and experienced coaches from the high school and collegiate ranks will also grow. Coaches will begin to evaluate their specialty areas, breaking down the event requirements and continuing to build the knowledge and develop techniques needed to help our athletes realize their goals and dreams. As that talent begins to work its way to the top, we may find ourselves redefining "speed" in these events just as the 4:00 minute mile run is now taken for granted.

In the end, it is not necessarily about beating David Weir at all. The athlete aiming to represent the United States at this level needs to gain an appreciation of what "the best" looks like and it is upon those of us new to the Paralympic world that Weir has perhaps unwittingly left his greatest mark. His legacy to Paralympic racing in Great Britain may be as of yet unclear, but he is "Sir David" at the moment to the rest of us.

The pursuit of excellence that Weir has achieved will demand much of the T54 athletes who will come to the starting line in Rio, and understanding what it takes to achieve this success is our first step.

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Mr. Kirk is an inductee into the Ohio Coaches Hall of Fame for the 48 times he has taken Chagrin Falls athletes to a state championship in high school cross-country or track & field. As the District 2 representative to the state coaches' association on behalf of all high schools in Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga Counties, Coach Kirk serves as the editor of the state newsletter The Runner, on the OHSA State Rules Advisory Committee, and on the Games Committee for the State Championship Meet. Mr. Kirk also serves as the Ohio coaches' representative to the United States Olympic Committee Paralympic Division and was a catalyst in helping make wheelchair events a part of OHSA sports. As a veteran of the United States Air Force, he is proud to serve as the Ohio coaches' liaison to the Wounded Warrior Project and the Warrior Games for disabled veterans.



A Conversation with Dr. Gloria Beim, Chief Medical Officer for the United States Olympic Team at the Sochi Olympic Winter Games

Kimia Grace Ganjaei, United States Olympic Committee

*Dr. Gloria Beim is an orthopedic surgeon based out of Crested Butte, Colorado where she founded three clinics that comprise the Alpine Orthopaedics, Sports Medicine & Regional Hand Center. Beim began college at the age of 14 and attended UC San Diego for medical school. She has followed many amazing pursuits in the arena of orthopaedics and sports medicine—. She is the author of the *The Female Athlete's Body Book*, which aims to promote injury awareness and prevention. She is a physician for Western State Colorado University Athletics as well as the U.S. National Track Cycling Team, for which she has served at many international events. Beim has also served as a member of the medical staff for the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, Chief Medical Officer for the 2011 Pan American Games in Guadalajara, Mexico and as Venue Medical Director for the 2012 London Olympic Games. I was able to speak with Dr. Beim about some of her experiences and what she is looking forward to as Chief Medical Officer—the highest medical position—at the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia.*

What type of preparation goes into the Sochi Olympic Winter Games as Chief Medical Officer (CMO)?

I'm working closely with Peter Toohey (USOC Sports Medicine Clinic Manager/Lake Placid) and Bill Moreau (USOC Managing Director of Sports Medicine) on preparing everything from pharmacy and equipment to helping develop a plan based on what the organizing committee is providing for us. We like to have as much equipment, medications, and recovery modalities available for our athletes in our own clinic at the Games as possible. If there is something we don't have, then we will utilize the polyclinic – whether it is an X-Ray machine or a certain medication that we don't have due to restrictions. In general, we like to have our athletes use our own sports medicine clinic as much as possible.

Another piece of [preparation] is making sure that all of our healthcare providers – medical doctors, chiropractors, athletic trainers, and physical therapists – have the appropriate licensure, insurance, and credentials to ensure they are going to be the best practitioners for our athletes. We are helping these providers complete their applications so that everybody is ready to go and is legally allowed to practice medicine in Russia. We are also getting our medical personnel ready for the Games. For instance, we gave a medical webinar to prepare people on what to expect when they are in Sochi. Everyone needs to be aware of what working in this setting is like – the hours you

need to work, doping controls, living situation, and travel. We are fortunate to have many medical providers who have international experience at previous international Games.

It is such an exciting time to be around all of these athletes. The privilege and honor of being a CMO is something beyond anything that I have ever dared to dream.

You've also served at the Athens and London Games. What was that experience like?

Well, London was really cool! I was the Medical Director for the High Performance Training Center, so that was a different experience from Athens. In Athens, I was mainly taking care of a few teams, but in London, I was able to run this clinic in the High Performance Training Center (HPTC). I had a wonderful medical team working with me. We had the privilege of taking care of many athletes in conjunction with their NGB doctors. I was able to be involved with a lot of different types of athletes and made sure that their experience at the HPTC was the best possible place to train and get the best outcomes in performance, which they did. They kicked it out there! It was wonderful.

I will tell you, every time I have gone to a Games, whether it's a World University Games or an Olympic Games or a Pan American Games, at all of these international games settings I learn new things. It makes me a better all-around doctor, even with my patients back home.

How has working at international games changed the way you work with your patients in Colorado?

I'll give you an example. I was at the Guadalajara 2011 Pan American Games, and I became really interested in diagnostic musculoskeletal ultrasound. I also had my first taste of instrument-assisted soft tissue mobilization (the Graston technique). It was such a great treatment modality that I sought certification as soon as I got back home, and I believe I was the first orthopedic surgeon to ever get certified in that modality. I pursued this because sometimes when you're traveling with a team, for instance, with USA Cycling, we might not have a provider who does the Graston technique or who does diagnostic ultrasound. So, I think it is really important for me to have those skills to help the athletes as well as my own patients back home. I would feel awful if an athlete came in with a strain and asked for a specific technique that has worked for them in the past and I would not be able help them. I like to learn as much as possible to help the athletes in any setting.

As far as diagnostic ultrasound, I now use this for almost everyone in my clinic. If I hadn't seen it at the Pan American Games, then it probably would have taken me a lot longer to take up using that diagnostic tool. I have been using it for a couple years now – it has really changed my practice for the better and my patients absolutely love it.



What are the typical hours you have to work during the Games?

A lot. It's a marathon. I am used to working long hours in my practice as an orthopedic surgeon, so it is really easy for me to adapt. I remember when I was in Athens, I ended up working anywhere between 18 to 20 hours a day, every day, for one month. I was the team doctor for USA Cycling and USA Taekwondo, but I ended up taking care of many other teams coming into the clinic. For me, it was fine because I had so much adrenaline and I was so honored to be there. I think most people feel that way. They're so excited to be there and there's so much on the line for Team USA that it's not an issue to work that hard for so long. For me, it's such a privilege.

When you're in the sports medicine clinic at the Olympic Games, what is a typical day like? Or is there no such thing as a 'typical day'?

There is nothing typical, absolutely nothing. You never know what to expect. You might have to take care of a cold, a stomach ache, a sprained ankle, a strained back, a broken bone, a laceration – you name it. You're ready for anything and everything. Of course you have a lot of people coming in for recovery as well.

Every time I go to the Games, I do a review of family practice and internal medicine. When I go with USA Cycling, I'm often "it" for medical. It is so important to review because you potentially may be the only one to help in a particular situation. When you're at international competition, particularly at an Olympic Games, it is so great to have other specialists available to help you. You try to be as prepared as you can, and you try to utilize your colleagues as much as you can.

What is unique about the Team USA's approach to sports medicine at the Olympic Games? Is there a certain method that may be different from other countries?

I have seen many different countries from the world cups I have covered with the U.S. cycling team. At those events, you tend to spend a lot of time with some of the other doctors and practitioners, and you can learn about what they're doing and they learn about what you're doing. I have noticed that the USOC is really into recovery. The recovery that they do is phenomenal. There is currently a sports nutritionist with us when we travel to the Olympic Games, which was not common at the Athens Games in 2004, but it has become more typical over the years. Our sports medicine department – we bring along so many amazing practitioners, so much equipment, and we make it so easy for the athletes to receive good medical care at the Olympic Games. I think the amount of time and resources put into sports medicine is absolutely worth it, and the results show.

What is it like to work with USA Cycling and other Olympic athletes? Is it different from working with athletes in other settings like professional sports?

It is a totally different feel. There is so much energy, passion, and commitment with the Olympic athletes. Everything is on the line. Some of these athletes work their entire life to get to one moment, versus professional athletes who have a game every week. [Professional athletes] are still passionate, but it is a different feel, and you can feel that energy when you are around these athletes. That is why I am so excited when I get to go to the Games or a world championship.

What are you looking forward to most at the Sochi Games?

I am really excited to speak Russian with the locals! The day I found out that I was going to be CMO, I'm taking this very seriously, I ordered Rosetta Stone and the Pimsleur Approach. I have been investing about one hour a day listening to my Russian tapes when I drive my car to work, take my dogs for a run, or cross-country ski. I can speak fairly well already, so I am excited to use the language because I know it's going to come in handy in some situations where we may not have our translator readily available and we may need to convey information to a doctor, a nurse or security detail. Plus, it makes a difference when you walk into a polyclinic and you talk to a doctor or a pharmacist or an X-Ray technician in their native language. Their faces light up and they get so excited and they are more apt to help you and your athlete. I have seen it happen at other Games. I learned a little bit of Greek when I went to Athens, and it really went a long way. And just for fun too – to learn and get to know people and understand a culture.

Something else that I'm looking forward to for Sochi is that I get to work with winter sports. I love the Summer Games, but winter sports are really my passion. I love to ski, I love to play hockey, and winter sports are a big part of my current practice in Crested Butte and Telluride, Colorado.

How did you first get interested in your research dealing with sports injuries in female athletes?

There are so many women who come into my office with overuse injuries. I see a lot of men come in as well, but particularly with women's knees, most of them are due to biomechanical imbalances in the hips, quads and hamstrings – the list goes on. I became very interested in getting the message out, not only to athletes, but also to the weekend warriors who come to ski in Crested Butte where I live. I wrote The Female Athlete's Body Book because I thought it was a great way to get the message out as a way to prevent injuries. For instance, if you get an injury, how do you treat it, can you treat it on your own, or do you need to go to the doctor? That is how I really became interested – because I saw a need. I'm actually writing another book because I see another huge need in the athlete population, based on what I've seen in my clinic.



I like to educate, and I like to get the word out to people. I am a little bit of a different kind of surgeon in that I don't necessarily believe that a cut is always a chance to cure. I believe in preventative medicine, physical therapy and rehabilitation. I believe in trying to keep people out of the operating room. If someone has tears in an ACL or rotator cuff, it is clearly different. I am not against surgery for these injuries. However, I believe in trying to rehabilitate people with impingement or bursitis. I am a little bit different than your average surgeon.

Surgeons definitely have the stereotype that they're excited to cut.

That's definitely a stereotype, but I'm not like that. That's part of the reason I love the USOC approach so much. They're so into preventative medicine, recovery, sports performance, and getting the athletes to the point where the risk of them needing a surgeon is low. A multidisciplinary approach really works. That's why our athletes have the best healthcare available.

Why did you ultimately choose to be a team physician as a part of your career?

It is such a privilege to work with these athletes. Even if you help these athletes in the smallest way, it feels so good, and it doesn't always have to be something medical.

For instance, I will tell you a story that I will never forget. It was one of the most exciting moments in Athens for me because I really made a difference. I was lined up with a judo athlete before a competition and about five minutes before it started, the judge sitting there looked at the athlete's "Gi" and said, "No no...you can't use that Gi." Apparently, there was this little logo on the "Gi" that was illegal, even though it was approved the day before by a different judge. Our athlete didn't want to use someone else's "Gi" because it wouldn't fit properly. So, I grabbed the Gi, ran to my sports medicine kit where I had some medical sutures and, using the suture that I would normally use to sew a wound, I ripped off the material off of another Gi and I sewed this little patch over that emblem with my medical sutures. I got that athlete to the competition on time and she went out and she competed. At first, you don't really think a thing like this is a big deal, but at the same time it was so thrilling – there was no time to lose! Where else can you do something like that and make such an impact?

The great thing about traveling to the Olympic Games or world championships is that you have to improvise. Sometimes, you're it. You're not just the doctor who's sitting there and waiting for someone to break an arm – you're it!

Fueling the Winter Sport Athlete on the Road to Sochi

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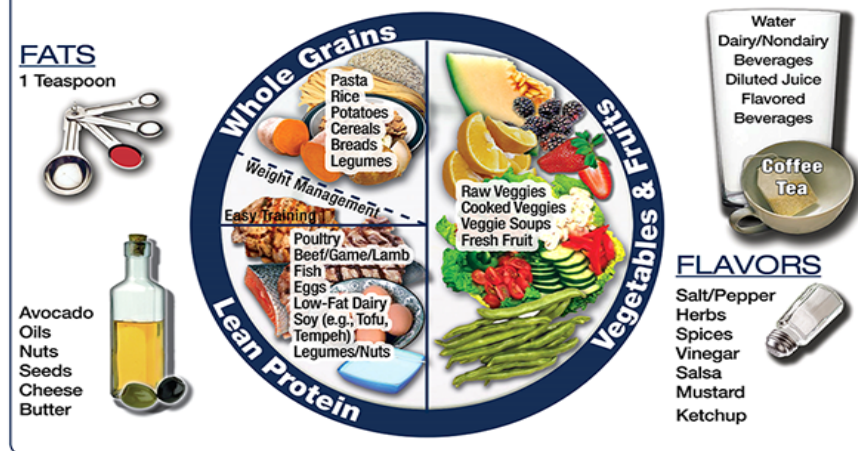
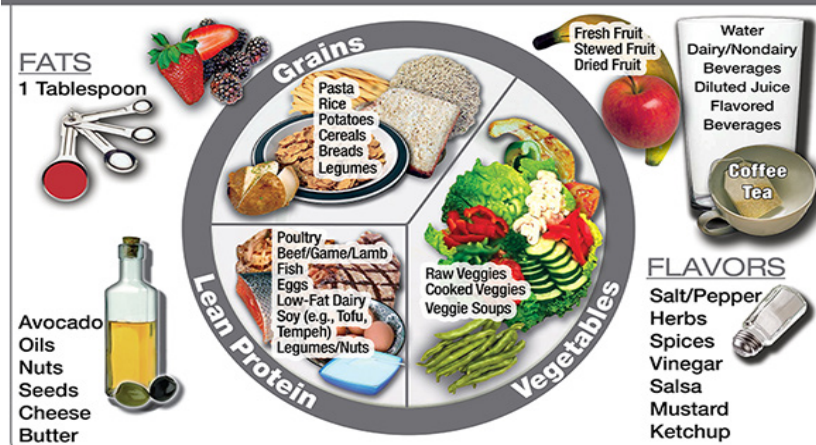
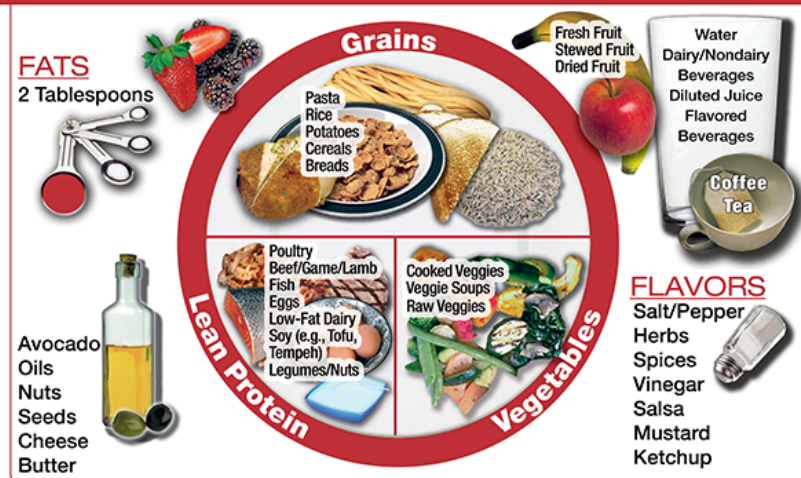
Sochi is just around the corner and attention should now be on optimal training and recovery and refining the athlete's nutritional status. Nutrition plays an integral role in providing energy, nutrients, and fluid to working muscles, but how exactly can an athlete add the extra push to enhance training adaptation through well-planned and timely eating and fueling strategies? In recent years, the topic of nutrition as it relates to training adaptation has evolved into the most popular area for researchers in sports nutrition. This article provides an update into this area, but also underlines the importance for winter sport athletes on the Road to Sochi to simply commit to good eating and hydration practices and develop their own fueling strategies for racing environments.

Adjust carbs to your training: eat more when it matters!

To optimally train day in and day out, athletes need carbohydrates. An easy approach to think about the athlete's training meals is to visualize the Athlete's Plate (See figure 1). For easy training (e.g., off day or one easy training session per day) and weight control needs, the plate is built on vegetables with a good source of meat, fish, poultry, eggs or tofu, and a handful of whole grain carbs such as brown rice, lentils or a sweet potato and plenty of fresh fruit. Plates are flavored with salt, pepper, spices, and healthy oils from olive oil, nuts and seeds. When training gets harder or more frequent (e.g., at least two sessions per day with one harder session; or a training day focused on technical aspects with greater volume than intensity), athletes need more carbohydrates because glycogen (storage form of carbohydrate) in the muscle will be limited if carbohydrates are restricted, and this likely compromises performance of most athletes in high intensity or endurance sports. Thus, about one third of the plate should now be covered with carbs, most of which are still whole grain (e.g., polenta, whole wheat pasta, quinoa). As training intensifies further (e.g., two or more training sessions, training under environmental extremes, or race preparation), meals are built on carbohydrates such as white (al dente) pasta, rice or potatoes, which are all easily digestible and quickly available to muscle in the form of glucose. These meals should still include vegetables and fruit, but less in raw form, especially prior to hard training sessions or races. It can take a long time to digest a large plate of raw salad, while cooked food usually takes less time. When digestion interferes with exercise, blood is shunted away from muscle to the gastro-intestinal tract instead, making exercise performance a difficult task. At greater training intensity and/or volume, athletes should also increase their dietary fat intake throughout the day. Fat from sources such as extra virgin olive and coconut oils, nuts, seeds, and avocado are great, as these oils are rich in antioxidants such as vitamin E and act as anti-inflammatories which is beneficial post-exercise. Protein does not vary much across training days because simply eating more on harder days will drive up protein intakes. Finally, meals should be tasty, easy to prepare, mostly home-cooked, and enjoyed around the athletes' table (rather than in front of the TV).



The Athlete's Plate - Samples for Eating and Training

EASY TRAINING / WEIGHT MANAGEMENT:**MODERATE TRAINING:****HARD TRAINING / RACE DAY:**

Recently, many athletes have followed the trends of gluten and wheat free as well as Paleolithic eating practices. There is no doubt that people with gluten intolerance or full-blown coeliac's disease must exclude gluten to decrease the risk of gastro-intestinal tissue damage. Whether following a gluten-free, or even the more limited Paleolithic diet, fits an athlete's training schedule is a matter of how these diets are implemented at home and on the road while traveling. In general, people feel good on these diets because they are finally improving their eating habits and include fresh, whole and less processed or junk food, which in turn decreases total caloric intake and results in weight loss. In fact, these diets are often followed as a tool to reduce carbohydrate, as misconceptions continue to prevail that to lose weight, carbohydrate must be reduced. However, what athletes don't understand is that low carb diets (which sometimes are also low calorie diets) can hurt performance, increase the risk of injury and illness, and reduce training ability, particularly in the more intense, sport-specific training sessions. Thus, carbohydrate restriction via gluten-free (if not followed wisely) or paleo approaches, can greatly affect training adaptation and performance. If these diets are not lower in calories, they may increase and not decrease body weight because they are also high in protein. This may be viewed as a great side effect, but bulking up can also be counterproductive and lead to unwanted weight and fat gain and possibly weight loss resistance in the longer term. In addition, a high protein diet is often high in fat, and thus, it does not always mean weight loss occurs with such approaches. Finally and perhaps most importantly, eating gluten free and paleo just because others are doing it may seriously compromise carbohydrate intake, and thus, the ability to recover from day to day and training may not go as planned.

Begin training hydrated!

Besides the meals, athletes also need good hydration practices, which should begin early in the morning. The first thing an athlete should do is drink a few glasses of water, right when waking up. A good approach to ensuring proper hydration status is to check the urine color at first void in the morning. It should be somewhat clear, but not dark yellow. Urine volume is another important indicator of hydration status. If only a few drops are produced at first void, the athlete is already dehydrated. Beginning the first training session in a dehydrated state sets them up for failure, as there is no way to catch up through the day, especially if training or sleeping occurs at altitude. Athletes should also know how much they sweat during exercise and replace lost fluids both during and post-exercise. Sport drinks work great for pre-, during and post-, as extra sodium helps retain fluids in cells and carbohydrate fuels performance. Especially post-exercise, sport drinks assist in supporting an optimal re-fueling strategy and timely rehydration.

Fuel up and Recover Fast!

Athletes often wonder what foods and fluids are best to fuel for training and whether eating a snack before training provides any advantages. A pre-training meal or snack should be consumed between one to four hours before exercise. The closer to the training session, the smaller the amount should be. The farther from the training session food is ingested, the greater the ability of the body to store the consumed food in form of energy (e.g., muscle glycogen), especially if a large meal is eaten. Smaller training snacks, consumed about one hour before exercise, can be comprised of

foods such as granola bars, oatmeal, apple sauce, or cereal with yogurt. During exercise, much attention has focused on the optimal sport drink and individually adapted fluid replacement strategies. For most winter sports, 30-60 grams of carbohydrates per hour of exercise is sufficient to maintain blood glucose levels and enhance performance. This amount can easily be ingested using a sport drink (typically 15 g of carbohydrate in 8 oz of sport drink) and eating a small snack such as an energy gel (25 g of carbohydrate) or half of a sport bar. Winter sports are organized quite differently and fueling regimens must fit the practicality of the sport. In most cases, bringing a backpack with food, fluids, and fuel is best. To target individual fluid replacement, teams should conduct sweat rate testing with the assistance of a sport dietitian. Many winter sports are logistically challenging, and weather delays in the mountains can compromise timely access to food and fluids, especially after training. Therefore extra food and fluids in the backpack are needed to initiate recovery, as lunch may be delayed for several hours. A pro-active and early (within the first 30 minutes of exercise) recovery nutrition strategy containing fluids, electrolytes, carbohydrates, and protein is key to support rehydration, glycogen repletion and muscle repair. For fluids, each pound lost needs to be replaced with three cups of fluid. For carbohydrate, about 0.5 g per pound of body weight (or ~50-75 g of carbohydrate) and 15 g and 25 g of protein for smaller female and larger female/male, respectively, are appropriate.

Immune Boost!

The immune system is often compromised in Olympic athletes. It is well known that immune function can suffer in highly trained athletes. Food can give a boost to the immune system and provide extra support when health maintenance may be challenged and the athlete is at greater risk for illness. For winter sport athletes this is most likely during the hardest training phase, which also coincides with fall and the flu season. Within the medical support team, athletes should be given access to the flu shot, extra supplements such as vitamin C, zinc, and probiotics. In addition, making an extra effort to get fresh, locally grown fruit and vegetables can make an impact. Juicing and making smoothies is a great way for packing in extra nutrients from food. Juices made with immune-boosting ingredients such as garlic, ginger, fresh herbs (e.g., mint), spices (e.g., cinnamon, turmeric, curry, cayenne), berries, citrus fruit, kiwis, dark leafy greens, and beets can help gain extra immune strength. Many vegetables are also nitrate-rich and studies have shown that dietary nitrate, especially from beetroot juice, may enhance performance.

Why local food for an immune boost? Locally grown food from farms close to you have adapted to the environment you live in. In addition, these foods are picked when ripe (higher nutrient content) and end up on your plate or in your drink within hours after picking. In addition, most locally grown food is free of pesticides and not genetically altered, maintaining the character of a real food! A good example is honey. Local raw honey has been considered an immune-boosting product rich in antioxidants since pre-historic times. Interestingly, it is the locally produced honey that exerts the greatest effect in people consuming it who also live in the same geographical region. In addition to the health benefits of local food, joining the local food scene is a great way to link up with your community and learn about the foods farmers grow in your region. When you see it you want to eat it!



Check your iron – Check your D

Winter sport athletes should not miss having their iron profile and vitamin D status checked in the blood. Sufficient iron stores are critical to adapt to high volume/intensity training. If athletes train or sleep at altitude iron supplementation may be required for optimal red cell adaptation. Vitamin D is synthesized from the sun in our skin, but winter sport athletes are often covered up with clothing or train indoors. In addition, recent research from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs shows that indoor winter sport athletes' values tank in the winter months. So testing vitamin D levels and initiating appropriate supplementation under the guidance of a health care professional is critical. Vitamin D is important for bone, muscle, and immune function.

Develop Your Race/Competition Day Strategy

Each winter sport is unique and it is beyond the scope of this article to map out racing strategy. However, developing a comfortable and effective fueling strategy for competition day is key for each athlete. Race preparation begins at least the night before with a carbohydrate-rich meal and is followed by pre-race meals and snacks as well as fueling strategies during and recovery nutrition after the effort. Because of individual needs it is best to work with a sport dietitian and hashing out the best race/competition day strategy. In addition, for those going to Sochi, it is best to pack their own supply of sport nutrition products. Not only will familiar foods be limited, but the shipping of many US foods will not be allowed due to the fact that US-grown and processed food contains genetically modified organisms (GMO) which unlabeled are not permitted in Russia.

On the road to Sochi, athletes need to understand the link between training, performance, health, and nutrition. Leveraging the summer months to dial in good nutritional habits, establish well-rounded fueling strategies for a variety of training exposures, and adopt health-maintenance approaches to prevent nutrient deficiencies and boost immunity will create a strong foundation on which to build the specifics of an individualized racing nutrition plan.

If you have specific questions or need extra support, please contact the USOC Winter Sport Nutrition Team:

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Do Elite Athletes Automatically Make Elite Coaches? Key Aspects of a First Year Coach's Workshop that Could Help Elite Athletes Transition to Elite Level Coaching

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The following article is an overview of the researchers' presentation at the USA Coaching Coalition's 2013 National Coaching Conference.

Many of us have watched elite athletes (such as a World Champion, an Olympic Champion, or NCAA Champion) and wondered what it would be like to train with them, learn from them, or be coached by them. Through their achievements, we recognize that these athletes know their sport thoroughly: the technique, the plays, the training, etc. Yet, is it an automatic 'slam dunk' that these athletes would know how to: coach a team, manage a team, lead and organize a team, and communicate effectively across a wide variety of situations, and with many different groups of people? Therefore we ask the question: Can we expect an elite athlete to automatically make an elite coach?

It is likely that elite athletes thoroughly know their sport, but we believe that many have not benefitted directly from coaching education. Because of this, we present a portion of our ideas for a first year coaches workshop that would assist elite athletes in a more effective transition into coaching. The elite level sport experiences, while valuable, need the support of proper fundamentals in coaching education. We believe the aspects of coaching presented here might better assist elite athletes to enjoy success within the coaching profession. The intended result is that young athletes will benefit from the knowledge and achievements of elite athletes.

This article is based in part on the feedback from university students in coaching education who collectively informed us of their perceptions and sport experiences regarding 'worst coaching practices' (as opposed to what we normally emulate as best coaching practices). Secondly, we base our ideas on a study conducted with four university athletic programs in which we asked coaches to reflect upon their first year of college coaching, and respond to the question: "What were the topics or issues that you weren't prepared to handle?" Their responses fit together hand-in-glove with the coaching literature which predicted that college coaches needed preparation in the following areas:

- Motivating student-athletes
- Managing conflict
- Building relationships
- Communication skills
- Management topics



This article will highlight two critically important topics for beginning coaches: communicating effectively and motivation of athletes. The topics match well with the fifth domain of the NASPE National Coaching Standards: Teaching and Communication (and the respective standards: 23: Clear Instruction; 25: Communication, and 26: Motivational Techniques). We begin by asking that elite athletes consider the following questions about communicating productively within a wide variety of situations. Because self-reflection is a valuable evaluation tool, these questions are equally useful for current coaches as they evaluate their coaching practices:

- Are you fair with your athletes? Are you consistent? While you may not treat your athletes equally, how do you know you are dealing with them fairly?
- Have you cultivated a positive rapport with your athletes? If not, do you know why? Are you willing to listen? Are you negative or pessimistic in your coaching? Do you evaluate every practice move or action of an athlete, and blame them for it, or do you teach and instruct them about how to correct an error in their performance?
- In what ways do you specifically support the student aspect of your student-athletes? If you simply think of them as athletes, you may be disrespecting their responsibilities as students and actually undermining their dual role.
- How do you know you have clearly explained your expectations to your team? Do your student-athletes understand their roles and responsibilities? Knowing that student-athletes are target-oriented, have you clearly explained exactly what those targets are, and what it means to satisfy expectations?
- What efforts do you take to manage and balance your student-athletes' mental and physical fatigue during practice and competition? In what ways would your athletes know that their coach has given them their undivided attention regarding their mental and physical needs during the coaching session or competition?
- What efforts have you taken to educate your student-athletes about showing respect to officials, coaches, other athletes, opposing teams, and fans? Be sure that you are not so focused on winning that you accidentally run roughshod over everyone to make sure your team at the expense of winning.
- Do you exemplify high standards and teach positive values, including responsible personal and social behavior? Do you conduct yourself in an "exempt from" category, presenting a false front to your student-athletes, or are you able to model what you teach and preach to them?
- Have you taken the time to educate yourself on developmentally appropriate characteristics of the age-group you are coaching? If you are coaching college student-athletes, did it occur to you that your team is at the very end of the adolescence spectrum?



- Do your actions model ethical conduct and teach good sportsmanship? For example, would you cheat (if you could) if it meant a win?
- Does your coaching demeanor and behavior model a professional composure and appropriate body language? Do your student-athletes see class in all of your actions as a coach? Could it be that your actions and behaviors as their coach have embarrassed them?
- Are you quick to shake hands with the officials and opposing teams or opponents after a competition? If not, do you understand what message you are sending to your team or athlete(s)?
- Finally, do you demonstrate and model a physically active lifestyle? We must remember as coaches, we have a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate fitness, good health, and great life habits that our student-athlete(s) can respect and aspire toward.

Communication – Non-Verbal

Another critical aspect of coaching involves nonverbal communication. Did you know:

- that 70% of your coaching communication is nonverbal?
- that coaches tend to demonstrate greater control over their verbal messages (than they do their nonverbal messages)?
- that body motion, physical characteristics, touching behavior, voice characteristics, and body position are all parts of nonverbal communication?

Ill-informed and unaware coaches could easily miss tremendous opportunities for positive nonverbal messages to their student-athletes.

Communication – Verbal

An equally important tool for all coaches to learn is skilled verbal communication. A newcomer to coaching will do well to consider how best to sharpen his or her messages to student-athletes.

- What words can you use that will most simply communicate your message so your student-athletes can understand and execute? Are your athletes ready to execute a drill, a play, an offense based on what you've given them for instruction, or is the message lost in an over-abundance of words? The phrase "less is more" applies well to coaching.
- Are you aware of the wide range of people and audiences listening while you are talking to your team or student-athlete(s)? Everyone from parents, other athletes, those on iPhones recording you and your actions, other coaches, future prospects to your team, reporters/media, administrators, etc., should always be on your radar as you communicate to your team. The coach is always on display.



- Have you mastered the art of thinking carefully before speaking? When you speak out loud, you give life to those words; it is impossible to take back the spoken word once uttered.
- Are you aware of the actual words you are using? As a coach, you must examine your word choices with attention to: racial/ethnic misunderstandings, sexual overtones, demeaning/tearing down phrases, shaming language, angry/bitter/frustrated words, emotionally desperate words, threatening language, cursing/unprofessional language, etc. A wise and careful coach will filter their words, and smart coaches examine their behavior and language for anything that could be potential lawsuit material. A coach's language can greatly enhance or diminish the sport experience for the student-athlete.
- Are you able to restrain the words that create negative possibilities and uncertainties? While you may have specific thoughts about a student-athlete's abilities, most of your thoughts might remain private. A coach should be able to determine what is appropriate to say out loud and what must be kept unsaid.
- Are you able to observe and evaluate your student-athlete's response to your words? When it is clear that a team or athlete did not clearly understand your instruction, are you able to rephrase, rework, and otherwise re-describe what you really expected them to do? Often, there are many ways to explain something.
- Are you able to make adjustments because you understand that coaching is emotional? It is valuable for coaches to have a firm grasp of his or her self-control, because of the exciting, volatile, roller coaster-like, thrilling experience of sport and coaching.
- Have you considered that a communication problem might actually be due to something other than your coaching style or delivery? Strong assistant coaches with an objective perspective, who have the pulse of the team can help you sort out the true origin of a communication problem.

In review, there are at least eight complications of communication in competitive sport. A coach cannot earn respect of his or her student-athletes if he or she:

1. Lacks credibility with the student-athletes;
2. Typically is a negative communicator;
3. Is apt to evaluate and blame, rather than to teach and instruct;
4. Acts inconsistently with the treatment of student-athletes;
5. Busily talks to student-athletes, but doesn't take time to listen to them;
6. Never shows emotion and lacks effective nonverbal communication;
7. Cannot explain concepts or instructions at the (emotional, psychological, educational) level of the student-athletes;
8. Lacks the ability to utilize reinforcement in teaching and coaching.

As Martens (2004, p. 101) says, "In competitive athletics, stress, passion and importance reign supreme."



Motivation

Another specific aspect of coaching that is critical for elite athletes entering coaching involves motivation. There are truly 1,000 ways to motivate your athletes, and motivation is carried out differently for every student-athlete, depending upon their personality. What works for one coach and student-athlete may not work for another coach and student-athlete. Our goal in this section is not to tell coaches how to motivate their athletes, but to cover five points of interest dealing with motivation that can get coaches thinking about and properly executing motivation.

First, we will look at why motivation is so difficult for young and inexperienced coaches. Then we will ask two very important questions when starting the motivation process. We will explore the responsibility of motivation - is it the role of the coach or should the athletes come to the program already motivated. We will investigate who these student-athletes are you are coaching. Finally, the author will discuss two motivational theories that every coach must have in his or her motivational tool-box.

In a study by Hoogestraat, Phillips, and Rosemond (2011), motivation was said to be one topic of interest that coaches wished they would have known more about--- before they started coaching. So, the question was asked, "Why is motivation so hard for first year coaches?"

In my 15 years of coaching, and eight years as an athletic director, I have found one common top priority of many new coaches: recruiting. Their goal is to recruit only the best athletes. Would this not be a reasonable goal for all coaches? It is important, however recruiting shouldn't be, and cannot be, the number one focus for a coach. When I was a young, inexperienced coach, I learned this lesson the hard way. In my first two years of college coaching, my goal was to recruit the best student-athletes. I learned quickly that these recruits didn't always fit my system, and typically were the "me" type athlete. They had always been the alpha male on their respective teams. Not being allowed to have that "I" mentality was often a struggle for some of the best athletes. As I became more experienced, and learned more about what was really important, I came to the conclusion that I needed to recruit the best people to fit my system. These student-athletes may not be the best player at that position, but for my philosophy and what I wanted to accomplish, they were a perfect fit.

Over the years I have learned two important questions to ask coaches and recruits during interviews: I asked coaches why they coached, and the players why they played.

Across the eight years of being an athletic director, the answer I heard more than any other from coaches was, "to recruit the best players and bring a winning tradition to the program". Recruiting the best players isn't necessarily a bad thing. But I don't believe it should be the number one focus. I learned that my main focus should be building relationships with my student-athletes and caring for them.

In a matter of about 5-minutes, I could pretty much tell what motivated each athlete by their response to the question why they played. For example, one of the student-athletes responded:

"I want to be a part of something bigger than myself. I know I'm going to have to work harder in college than I did in high school and I want to work hard together as a team."

Motivation was never an issue for athletes with this type of response.

The opposite response was that of another student-athlete raised by his grandmother (while his father had spent time in and out of jail, and his mother left him when he was a young boy). When asked this same question, he responded:

"I just want a college education. I can't afford to go to college, but with a basketball scholarship I will be able to go. Getting to play basketball would be icing on the cake."

This was a student-athlete that required continual motivation to keep him positive about school and his play.

Contradicting view-points on motivation across time has played havoc with coaches. There are coaches who believe that student-athletes should already come to the program motivated and willing. For example, Lou Holtz, most famous for coaching football at Notre Dame, once said, "It's not my job to motivate my athletes. They should come to the program already motivated. It's my job to make sure I don't de-motivate them." Some coaches share this opinion, but from what I've experienced over the years, a coach must motivate the players. A good example involves my student-athletes' return to campus for pre-season conditioning after having a month or two break. In basketball, the student-athletes would return to pre-season in June. Their day consisted of strength and conditioning early in the morning, breakfast, then return for a mid-morning practice. They would eat lunch, take the afternoon off, and return in the evening. Most of them napped in the afternoon with nothing to do except focus on basketball. This went on for July and August until classes started in late August. They were rested and for the most part, easily motivated. When school began and practices started ramping up, motivation became a problem. They started having homework assignments, projects, and exams. They would start missing their girlfriends back home and their mother's home-cooking. At this point the value of the relationships a coach has developed with their players becomes critical; knowing their likes and dislikes, and figuring out the many personalities. In his recent book *Leading with the Heart*, Coach Mike Krzyzewski, Head Men's Basketball Coach at Duke University, said it best, "The main job of a coach is to motivate, the main job of a leader is to inspire." The bottom line is that you have to motivate. The key is to develop those relationships so that you will know your student-athletes. Doing so will equip you with a more clear understanding of how to motivate them.

Which brings us to another critical component of motivation: knowing your athletes. You must know who they are within our culture. If you are coaching today's young athletes, you are coaching individuals known as "Millenials." Millenials are children born between the years 1982 and 2002.



There are a few characteristics of this generation that makes coaching very different from previous generations. Long gone are the General Patton-like days when coaches yelled, berated, and often-times, degraded their players. Millennials simply cannot handle this type of coaching. This generation is a “freedom” generation, meaning they want freedom to express themselves in writing, speech, and they pretty much say what they want – which is to be respected and treated fairly. This generation has been told from the start that they are special, with anything less viewed as unfair and critical. As they participated in youth sports, they always received a trophy at the end, whether they attended practices and games or not. Parents of Millennials have hired specialization coaches to tell the young athletes how special they are: that one day they will go professional in their sport. Millennials are a pressured society competing against their peers in every aspect of their life. They compete in high school, sports, dating, college, and eventually for jobs. Lastly, they are a “want it now” generation accustomed to speedy service – from ordering fast food, to online communication. The startling priorities of this generation of student-athletes are another reason why coaches need to know their athletes. Coaches need to develop the techniques relevant to their sport – the Xs and Os, but also take time to learn the “Jimmy’s and Joe’s.”

There is no one correct way to coach. Every coach has his or her philosophy and goes about teaching and coaching using many different methods. The last key point in dealing with your athletes and motivation involves two theories every coach must practice.

The first method is the Behaviorism Theory concluding that all people want to be praised and need their actions reinforced. As with an employee who works in a factory and needs positive reinforcement, so do our athletes. The key is that praise and reinforcement should be used judiciously and must be sincere. It should be specific and constructive. Praise provides information about performance and notion of self. An example would be, “Bryce, way to think. That’s the way to make the correction the first time.” Not only are you telling Bryce that he did well, but you are also encouraging him that he is smart, intuitive, and can make the necessary changes.

When reinforcing and praising your athletes, it’s important to do three things:

- First, encourage them in something they did correctly
- Second, tell them what they can do to correct any needed improvements
- Third, explain why.

An example could be, “Daniel, you did a great job of keeping your man out of the middle of the lane that time. However, next time try and get lower and chop those feet more to allow you to get in better position to push your man to the sideline and baseline. Pushing your man to the sideline and baseline creates an extra defender for us.” Notice how I first encouraged, then told him what he could do for next time and why it’s important.

The second theory is Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Abraham Maslow postulated that every man must have his basic needs met first before being motivated to do something he otherwise might not do. Maslow constructed six basic needs that every person must address. The first



is basic needs. Every person must have their basic needs of food, shelter, and water supplied. How does this apply to you as a coach? I distinctly remember when one of my student-athletes had used his lunch hour to study for a Chemistry exam. After the exam was over he immediately came to practice, and had not eaten since a 6:00am bagel prior to the exam. As soon as we began practice, I could tell he was going to be in trouble. Halfway through the practice, he couldn't even comprehend basic simple movements of motion offense. His mind and body were spent, and he couldn't practice one more moment. The second need is safety. The bottom line is to make sure you are running safe practices. Don't run drills that could possibly hurt your players. Keep equipment checked and in good working order. Third, every person needs their psychological needs met. As a coach, treat your players with respect and issue constructive criticism. Fourth, belongingness and love needs must be met. Simply accept your athletes and who they are as individuals. This is best created by having team building activities at the beginning of the season to help your team members bond and rely on one another. Fifth, they must have their self-esteem needs met. As mentioned above, treat your players as people and care for them more as people than you do as student-athletes. This gives them needed self-confidence. Lastly, once their basic needs are met, athletes can potentially rise to the self-actualization stage of Maslow's pyramid. Maslow stated that not everyone will reach this stage – it's the apex moment when you have arrived! Ultimately, I'm not sure any of us ever reach the apex in life. Understand that this is where growth takes place, when your athletes feel loved and cared for so that they can grow and mature into the adults you want them to become.

Throughout this article it should be clear that you are not being told how to motivate your athletes. Steps have been provided that must be met and understood before starting the journey on motivating your student-athletes.

- Develop those long lasting relationships with your student-athletes.
- Take time to ask that tough-yet-important question of why they play so as to better understand how they are motivated. Coaches need to understand that they really do have to motivate, and that most athletes don't come perfectly motivated, ready to perform.
- Use reinforcement and praise with your student-athletes, and make sure you are meeting their most basic needs before you expect ongoing growth and development.

In Pete Carroll's words, "What if my job as a coach isn't so much to force or coerce performance as it is to create situations where players develop the confidence to set their talents free and pursue their potential to its full extent? What if my job as a coach is really to prove to these kids how good they already are, how good they could possibly become, and that they are truly capable of high-level performance?" What if?

Being a coach in today's sport culture could be one of the toughest jobs anyone could undertake. The coaching profession has seen an unprecedented paradigm shift during the last several years. Coaches who have had multiple winning seasons and are exemplary role-models for their student-athletes, are now being fired. A recent example was the firing of Orlando "Tubby" Smith at the University of Minnesota in March 2013. Coach Smith tied a UM school record in with 23 wins in



2011-2012. Then in the 2012-2013 season, Coach Smith won 21 games while playing in arguably the toughest basketball conference in the nation. His team was one win away from the Sweet Sixteen when they lost to Florida in the third round of this year's NCAA basketball tournament. After the firing of Tubby Smith, ESPN Commentator Jay Bilas noted, "This is one of the saddest days in college basketball." This paradigm shift ought to be an eye-opener for every coach, especially the young and inexperienced coach. In the study of Four University Athletics Departments, the authors found out that either: 1) crucial aspects and fundamentals of coaching were not understood by first year coaches (and administrators) or, 2) someone simply failed to teach them.

It is our goal that athletic departments will start taking a pro-active stance on teaching and training their first year coaches, and for all coaches (who are not yet adequately prepared to meet the rigors of the coaching profession). Experienced coaches and athletic directors must recognize that motivation, communication, building relationships, and managing team conflicts are all important aspects of the coaching profession. Our goal was to shed light on this growing concern that coaches are being inadequately prepared to coach. It is our hope that coaches will get back to the fundamentals of coaching by focusing first and foremost on the student-athlete. As Coach Morgan Wooten stated, "Coaches ought to care more for their players as people than they do as players."

Final Thoughts

Coaches are in a unique position to model, mentor, guide, and instill qualities into young adults' lives that many of them are not receiving from our society as a whole. As authors of this article and as former coaches, we know that coaching has changed drastically within the last 15 to 20 years. As a result, we need to make sure that we are adapting and are not becoming ineffective with the student-athlete because we have lost the ability to communicate in an understandable way.

Today's elite athlete needs his or her coach to care for them as individuals; this calls for coaches to understand that their profession has changed and they must adjust in order to be successful. Change is not only necessary for the student-athlete, it is vital for the coach. Moreover, in dealing with change, it is necessary for coaches to foster the change (or growth) process. For instance, what often happens to coaches who are not educating themselves (by attending workshops, coaching clinics, webinars, or reading articles and books, etc.) is that they become stagnant and lose their competitive edge on how to work with athletes. Coaches should examine themselves in the area of motivation, communication, building relationships, and managing conflict.

As mentioned in this article, millennials are a different breed of student-athlete who have been sheltered and who love to express their emotions verbally and in writing. Therefore, it may be better to challenge these student-athletes to take responsibility for their own success by encouraging them to learn how to motivate themselves as well as work with the coach to obtain peak

performance. This is a partnership strategy in which the coach and the student-athlete work together as a team for the betterment of the entire program.

Clearly, we live in an era in which many athletes think that their coaches “owe” them. Honestly, the coach owes their athletes ONE thing...to care for them. Caring means pointing the athlete in the right direction not only during game time, but also during their lifetime.

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2013 IIHF Women's World Championship - Gold Medal Game - Canada v USA

By: Richard Wolowicz/Freestyle Photo, Getty Images Sport

People: Meghan Agosta-Marciano; Gigi Marvin



Gold medallists the United States celebrate with their coach Adam Krikorian after winning the Women's Water Polo Gold Medal match between the United States and Spain on Day 13 of the London 2012 Olympic Games. (Photo by Paul Gilham/Getty Images)

The following is a transcript of the interview session held at the 2013 National Coaching Conference hosted by the USOC. John Crawley, USOC High Performance Director for Team Sports, interviewed USA Water Polo's Women's National Team Coach Adam Krikorian and four-time Olympian Heather Petri about their road to the Gold Medal in London 2012.

John Crawley: Adam, at UCLA you were an athlete and captain of the team your senior year and then immediately became the coach the following year. What were the challenges transitioning from player to coach?

Adam Krikorian: It was difficult; I was coaching athletes who knew everything about me. We went to school and hung out together. Being captain of the team put me in a leadership position, but I was fighting for respect early on. I felt I had to create a separation between player and coach. I learned this was not the way to do it because I was not being myself. I realized that I had to just be myself because that is why you are there and people will believe in you.

John: You had a great coach and mentor during your career. Could you describe your relationship with Coach John Wooden?

Adam: The nice thing about UCLA was having access to Coach Wooden and thus having the opportunity to meet and talk with him. We would talk not only about water polo and coaching, but other matters in life including being a dad and having a family. I think back to all the material Wooden wrote, taught, and spoke about, and I consider him the best coach of all time. There is no better example or role model than John Wooden. I was fortunate to be put in a great situation, surrounded by some of the best coaches, in order to achieve this success and for that I am privileged and honored.

John: Heather, who did you look up to in the sport of water polo as well as in other arenas?

Heather Petri: I can't name just one. It was a whole mix of people. Inspiration comes from learning and for me it started with my parents who instilled characteristics that I used my entire career. Then as I progressed it became my first coaches, teammates, and friends who supported me. As for my team, we looked to the US Soccer squad because they had gone through a similar transition building their program. This helped us better ourselves and grow as a team.

John: Heather, you were twenty-two when you started on the national team and were thirty-four in London. What kept you motivated, healthy, and able to have such a long and productive career?

Heather: You have to love what you do. It came from my parents, who let us try anything. We had to commit fully to whatever we chose and this led me to become accountable. What ultimately drove my career was allowing it to become my choice. Since I was able to make a conscience choice, I was still learning and working to make myself better and to be the best athlete.

John: Ok, we are going to change directions. The journey to the London Olympic final did not go without issues. The team had been incredibly successful before the Games, but then a problem occurred at the 2011 World Championships. Winning sometimes masks underlying issues and complications and the challenging times often bring them to the surface. Talk about the game versus Russia, specifically the third quarter and what happened after the game?

Adam: We were the number one team going into the World Championship. The quarterfinal game was against Russia and we were off to a great start, up 6-2 at halftime. Then all of the sudden it was tied 6-6 during the third quarter and I did not call a timeout, which I should have. Russia went up 9-6 during the fourth quarter and I clearly remember seeing blank faces on all my players because we did not know how to respond, we did not have the ability to respond to the situation at hand. We had been winning for a period of time, but despite this winning there were still deficiencies and it all surfaced after this devastating loss. It was then I grasped the team and I had to work to fix them.

Heather: As an athlete you try and think what can you do to help the plight. It felt like nothing was working and we comprehended after that "the team was not connected the way they should have been and froze." As Adam said we did not have the ability to come together.

John: The team did some "soul searching" and worked to resolve the situation. Then it came time for the Pan American Games to qualify for the Olympics. Team USA was losing by three in the championship game versus Canada. Adam, describe the transformation in the fourth quarter that carried on into overtime and the shootout?

Adam: At the World Championships there was no proper leadership or deep connection between the players. This game was the perfect test for us and all the pressure to win was on Team USA. We had worked on our problems and improved communication and trust. During the fourth quarter



we came back to send the game to overtime and then into a shootout. The game continued to a second round of shootouts where our MVP missed, but our goalie came up with a save. Then in the fourth round of the shootout we made our final shot and the goalie made a tremendous save to win the game and send Team USA to the Olympic Games. We had not only made the games, but also defeated our own adversary because of the better internal connection. I look back and am thankful for the loss to Russia because I believe that is why the team won the gold medal (in London).

John: What was it like playing in a shootout?

Heather: The entire experience was a testament of how we got to that moment. After the Russia game, I met with Adam and he said he did not think the team could come together. Well, that made me fired up to say “yes” we will become the best team going into the Pan American Games. As a team we decided to spend an hour each day doing team bonding activities outside of the water. I knew during the entire shootout we were going to win because of our mental preparations and “the will to do it together.”

John: Adam, talk through the experience at the Olympic semifinal when Team USA was up 9-8 with one second left and you called a timeout?

Adam: (smiles) I think I one-upped Chris Webber and the Michigan game. We were playing our biggest rival in the semifinal game, which is the biggest game because it gives you the chance and guarantee of playing for a medal. It came down to nervousness, misunderstanding, and vision, but I thought we had possession of the ball and I called a timeout. However, she (Team USA goalie Betsey Armstrong) did not have possession so it led to a penalty shot for Australia and they tied the game, sending it to overtime. With all the momentum in their favor, I remember staring blankly into the stands thinking, “You idiot, you just blew chance to win a gold medal.” These girls had worked four, eight, twelve years and I had messed it up. I do not remember what I said to the girls before the overtime period, but it was only ten to fifteen seconds long. I then realized as they were waiting in the pool that we still had a chance to win. We had a good team and dominated the second half. I called them back over and told them we would not let some mistake by me affect the fate of this team. The team started talking amongst themselves. As I watched them talk with each other, all I was thinking was that they did not need me anymore. We went on to win the game and finally the gold medal. It was the worst coaching mistake I will make, but ironically is the proudest moment of my career. We had been striving to be able to play cohesively in pressure situations with confidence. All the work they put in led to this win and I will never forget it because it was my most rewarding moment.

John: (to Heather) After all of that you advance to the gold medal final. The game ends and there is no real celebration. Instead, the team huddles up. Can you talk about that?

Heather: In the moment there were many different things going through our heads. It was a testament to how far we had had come and portrayed what we can do together. It went to show that



putting your attention where you want it can help. We did not focus on our mistake, but instead focused on what we realized that we could do together. As a team we had faith and achieved the ultimate result because we believed in each other.

John: (to Adam) A side story, can you talk about your son at the start of the Olympic final because it is a testament to the culture that Adam talks about? The environment for performance, learning, growing, and family, and Adam's story speaks volumes to that.

Adam: We try to create a hardworking, no nonsense, competitive environment, but we also like to have fun, keep the mood light, and really try to enjoy the moment as much as possible. Before the gold medal game, we huddled up in a circle. My wife and kids were sitting right behind our circle. My son, Jack, relates well with Maggie Steffens, who was standing next to me. As I am about to address the team, he starts screaming her name "Maggie! Maggie! Over here!". Maggie and I have a good laugh and are able to enjoy the moment, but then refocus back to the game at hand.

John: It brings to light an interesting topic about pressure and visibility of the Olympic Games. Both of you have been in games from the NCAA to the World Championships. What differentiates the Olympic Games from all the others?

Heather: Water Polo is a sport not watched by many, but at the Olympic Games everyone is watching so there are more expectations and it feels different. As I look back at my first games, I thought I had to be perfect, but realized that it does not matter if more people are watching because you love what you are doing. I think that is the difference, how many people are paying attention.

Adam: Unquestionably it is different, but you prepare beforehand to be sure it is not that different. I spent hours with the team discussing the Olympics and going over distractions and moments because I felt it was my job to prepare them from a mental standpoint. At the games you felt the excitement, but in the game it felt like another tournament because the preparation impacted those feelings.

John: Comment on the value of life and work balance, how it impacts the ability to perform and how much time you spend to ensure the balance is there.

Adam: As a coach it is impossible to have complete balance because it is a twenty-four/seven job. I have a supportive wife and kids, which teaches perspective and helps to take some of the pressure off. Coaching does not define me as I am still the same person after a gold medal or World Championship loss. You realize it is just a game and there is more to life than sport.

Heather: I agree. It can be time-consuming and you must evaluate what else you need in life. The best thing I did was communicating my expectations and commitment to my family and friends. In doing so it allowed me to take advantage of the time I have with them and made it easier for them to understand and support me.



Since taking over the reins of the U.S. Women's Senior National Water Polo Team in March 2009, Adam Krikorian has been nearly perfect, leading the U.S. to a world championship, world cup and Pan American Games title – and most recently, capturing the gold medal at the London 2012 Olympic Games, which marked the program's seventh world title in the last four years. The historic performance marked the first Olympic gold for the women's team, which finished the 2012 season with a 34-4-1 record. Additionally, Krikorian added his fourth straight FINA World League title last summer. For his efforts, he was recognized with the Sandy Nitta Distinguished Women's Coaching Award, which is presented annually in honor of the top-performance by a coach of an elite women's program.

Heather Petri is a one of the most decorated female water polo players in the world. She is one of two US female water polo players to have competed and medaled in four Olympic Games. Petri earned a silver medal in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, a bronze in the 2004 Athens Olympics, a silver in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and capped her career with a gold medal in the 2012 London Olympic Games. She is also a three time gold medalist in the Pan American tournaments (2003, 2007, 2011) and a three-time gold medalist at the World Champions representing Team USA (2003, 2007, 2009). Petri was an All-American at UC-Berkley.



United States coach Adam Krikorian speaks with his players in the Women's Water Polo Gold Medal match between the United States and Spain on Day 13 of the London 2012 Olympic Games (Photo by Al Bello/Getty Images)

Shining in Sochi: Mental Toughness at the Winter Olympics

Jim Afremow, Founder Good to Gold Medal, PLLC

The eyes of the world will be on Sochi, Russia, for seventeen thrilling days from February 7 through February 23. Understandably, for those two and a half weeks the Olympians are likely to feel as if they are being put under a giant microscope. The athletes will have to overcome major mental challenges during the Games to get—and stay—in the right frame of mind to succeed, all while simultaneously dealing with media scrutiny and public fanfare. Here are four mental keys all participants will have to master in order to perform at their peak level:

1. Keep a laser-like focus in the face of major distractions. Distractions will be plentiful during the Games, and they can include such diverse factors as the Olympic Village, relationship concerns, safety threats, political issues, media demands, social media, housing problems, different/unfamiliar foods, and the mass of spectators. The key for successful athletes will be to maintain discipline at the right times (mind on performance) while also knowing when it is time to unwind (mind off performance).

Olympians can, and should, take a moment to fully enjoy the total experience because involvement in the event is itself a well-deserved reward. However, when it comes time to compete, they must be dialed-in immediately before and throughout their performances. In competition, this requires that athletes focus fully on what they have to do in the moment, not what the final outcome might be or any other extraneous factors. They must concentrate on their execution to achieve the desired result.

2. Maintain supreme, unwavering confidence. In a passage from my new book *The Champion's Mind: How Great Athletes Think, Train, and Thrive*, Duncan Armstrong, an Olympic gold medalist in swimming, vividly explains the challenge at hand: "When you get to the Olympics and represent your country, you're not just facing athletes who have prepared for the past twelve months, two years, four years, or even ten years. You're facing highly motivated, very talented, uncompromising, and deadly serious people who have dreamed and prepared for this particular event their whole lives!"

The successful Olympian must respect their competition, but at the same time respect their own capabilities even more. Olympians who energetically embrace competition will meet the challenge, rather than becoming demoralized or overwhelmed by their proximity to rising stars or established legends in their events. Participants should view the Games not only as a great challenge, but as a special opportunity to put all of their training to use and showcase their immense talent. As Herb Brooks, coach of the 1980 U.S. Olympic "Miracle on Ice" team said to his athletes, "You were born to be a player. You were meant to be here. This moment is yours."



3. Conquer all fears and frustrations. Murphy's Law states that if things can go wrong, they will go wrong. Over the course of their history the Games have encountered virtually every possible adverse situation—from minor delays to major tragedies. In contrast to the Summer Games, weather elements typically play a larger role at the Winter Olympics. Skiers and biathletes, for instance, must often cope with the unpredictability of the weather, such as freezing temperatures, heavy snowfall, and visibility problems.

Athletes will be doing their best to stay in a positive frame of mind regardless of any unforeseen events that occur. To accomplish this, Olympians should decide in advance to under-react to anything negative or surprising that might happen, to always expect the best but be mentally prepared for everything. Rolling with the punches and emotionally detaching from all things outside their immediate control will be essential. As author and attorney Leonard Scheff advises, "When angry, count to Zen."

4. Bringing one's intensity to the right level when needed. After years of anticipation, the Games have finally arrived. It is easy for athletes to get too excited in the days prior to their event, wasting precious mental and physical energy as a result. They might also forget to protect their rest and recovery time and maintain a steady sleep schedule. Proper energy management is crucial for all competitors.

Though Sochi may represent an unfamiliar environment for the participant, what they must remember is that the physical task of optimizing one's performance is always the same. Therefore, Olympians should stick to their pre-performance and in-performance routines as much as possible. There is a natural tendency to speed everything up when faced with perceived pressure; however, Olympians should do their best to slow things down, especially if they find themselves rushing—whether while training, talking, walking, or eating. Maintaining consistent breathing is also vital in keeping the mind calm and the body tension-free.

All the years of physical training are now in the books. Olympians must trust their training and preparation completely. They must allow their bodies to do what they have been trained to do—nothing more, nothing less. The characteristics of mental toughness outlined above will put each athlete in a position to excel. Using these keys, the pressure of the Olympics will be effectively channeled into a winning performance, giving the athlete the greatest chance to shine in Sochi. Remember, it takes tremendous pressure to produce rare diamonds!

*Dr. Jim Afremow is a sports psychology specialist, licensed professional counselor, and the author of *The Champion's Mind: How Great Athletes Think, Train and Thrive* (Rodale, January 2014). He is the founder of Good to Gold Medal, PLLC, a leading sports psychology coaching and consulting practice. To learn more about Dr. Afremow, including details regarding his services and products, please visit his website: www.goldmedalmind.net.*



On the cover: Olympics - Closing Ceremony (Vancouver 2012)

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