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## **Oops My Bad....5 Reasons Why Athletes Make Mental Mistakes**

We have all seen sporting events when athletes do not make routine plays or are way out of position. We wonder “what were they thinking?” Sports psychologists point out that there are some obvious but crucial situations when all athletes are susceptible to mental phases. Here are 5 that you should be aware of at all times

1. Worrying about the outcome – This occurs when the athlete starts thinking more about the outcome of the event than the specific processes it will require to achieve the outcome. You need to always be in the process mode. In this mode, a football team will focus on each possession, a tennis player will focus on one point at a time, or a golfer will focus on one shot at a time. A competitor who develops the ability to get himself or herself back into the “process mode” after drifting off into the outcome zone will consistently play at higher levels.
2. Fatigue – Mental mistakes are likely to occur when you are tired. Physical and mental fatigue often go hand in hand, so stay in optimal physical condition and pace yourself during an event. If you make mental mistakes, at least you can eliminate proper conditioning as one of the reasons
3. Underestimating the Opponent – Mental mistakes are sure to happen when you underestimate the opponent. Think Appalachian State vs. Michigan in 2007. The underdog likes nothing better than to be taken lightly by the favorite, and it often gives extra motivation (“bulletin board material”) to the underdog. It is hard to do, but you should go into each contest assuming that you can lose, regardless of the opponent’s record or talent (remember item #1 – stay in the process mode). For some, fear of losing is not a bad thing, because it becomes a good defense against mental letdowns.
4. Taking a Situation for Granted – How many times have we seen a team down by double-digits early and then come back and win? The solution is to develop a killer instinct. Great athletes have the ability to finish the job once an opponent is down. Again this goes back to Item #1 – stay in the process mode
5. Trying to Impress Others – Finally, mental mistakes happen when an athlete tries to make the spectacular play rather than the routine or right play. We have

all seen athletes go for a great shot in tennis or golf, try to “go deep” in baseball or try to throw someone out instead of hit the cut-off man. We have seen a basketball player attempt a “Vince Carter like” slam when a layup would suffice or a running back break outside when he should have followed his blockers up the middle. Looking good becomes more important than playing well

Understanding these five common mistakes and reminding yourself on a frequent basis will keep these mistakes to a minimum. The key is Item #1 – Stay in the process mode.

\*\*Remember to

1. Always plan ahead for what you are going to eat
2. Obtain adequate amounts of protein
3. Work on Flexibility
4. Supplement your diet with a fish oil and multi-vitamin

Let me know if I can help. Email me at [architectsports@gmail.com](mailto:architectsports@gmail.com)

God Bless,

Alan Tyson

Physical Therapist, Athletic Trainer, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist