

Did you know that over 90% of Canadian Olympians work regularly with a mental trainer or sport psychologist?



*Do you want to be able to get the most out of every performance?*

**Let's get a jump on the competition!**

**Oakhurst Farm is excited to offer a series of  
4 mental skill builder workshops with  
Paige Mattie, MHK, BSc., Mental Performance Consultant**



**Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**Sunday January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Sunday February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016**

**Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Participants will be divided into 2 groups based on their LTED stage of competition and training. Workshops will be 90-minute group sessions held in the viewing room at Oakhurst Farm.

Group #1 10:00am – 11:30am

Group #2 11:30am – 1:00pm

Please note that in order to provide the most benefit to our athletes these sessions will be capped in numbers.

Sessions are \$40 each or \$140 for all 4 sessions

Please contact Ruth [ruth@oakhurstfarm.com](mailto:ruth@oakhurstfarm.com) to sign up

All Competitive students are **STRONGLY** encouraged to make these workshops a priority.

## What is Sport Psychology?

Sport Psychology is the study of how psychological factors influence sports, athletic performance, exercise and physical activity. Sport psychology professionals or Mental Performance Consultants work with athletes and coaches of all levels of experience and ability to help improve their athletic performance. Mental training is viewed as one of the key areas (Physical, Technical, Tactical, Mental) in which competitive athletes train in order to reach their optimal level of performance.

## Some common 'myths' of Sport Psychology:

- ❖ *Psychological Skills Training is for "problem" athletes only*
  - Mental skills training is not a treatment for "abnormal" athletes, but instead a training area for all types of athletes trying to perform to the top of their ability
- ❖ *Mental training is a "Quick Fix solution"*
  - Just like physical and technical training, mental skills need to be learned and practiced regularly in order to be effective
- ❖ *Experts trained in sport psychology are psychiatrists*
  - Most sport psychology practitioners or Mental Performance Consultants have backgrounds in kinesiology and behavioral science, and are not qualified to work with mental disorders or clinical psychological issues
- ❖ *Mental Training is used only by elite competitive athletes*
  - Athletes of all ages and competitive levels can benefit from mental training, and athletes as young as 5-6 years have been shown to use and retain sport psychology skills

## How can Mental Skills Training help my performance in sport?

Sport Psychology can be used to:

- Enhance or improve upon a current skill
- Assist in learning new skills
- Control competitive anxiety
- Overcome "mental blocks"
- Maintain focus
- Prepare optimally for competition

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*A Little about Paige Mattie: Paige obtained a BSc in Psychology and Kinesiology at McGill University and a Master of Human Kinetics in Sport and Exercise Psychology from the University of Windsor. Her academic research has focused on psychological skills training, imagery, and mental toughness in athletes. Paige has worked in a mental training capacity with amateur and collegiate athletes of 19 team and individual sports. Her work emphasizes psychological skills training and mental preparation for peak performance, empowering performers with cognitive techniques that help them excel in training and competition. Her athletic experience includes a silver medal at the 2004 World Junior Curling Championship. In addition to consulting with athletes, she is employed full-time as a Mental Performance Specialist with the Canadian Forces*

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## Here are a few of the mental skills you will learn about in the Sport Psychology Sessions.

**Routines.** Implementing structured routines before every performance, event or competition allows athletes to achieve consistent performance. Routines assist athletes in staying focused on the essential elements of the competitive environment while also enhancing feelings of control and confidence. Pre-event and pre-competition routines should include both physical and mental components. In order to be most effective, pre-performance routines must be practiced regularly both in training and competition.

**Mental Imagery.** Mental imagery, or visualization, is one of the most commonly used mental skills by high performance athletes. Mental imagery is shown to be very effective in helping athletes learn new skills, to make changes to a technique, or even to manage confidence, self-doubt or anxiety. Eventing skills can be mentally practiced from the perspective of the athlete's own view (**internal imagery**) or from the perspective of someone watching them, such as a coach on the sidelines (**external imagery**). When mentally imaging a perfect performance, it is important to incorporate all of the senses (eg. what you hear, smell and feel), not only a visual picture of the skill or performance.

**Managing Sport Anxiety.** Most athletes require a specific level of "activation" or anxiety in order to achieve consistent peak performance. Many high performance athletes learn techniques to achieve this ideal amount of nervous energy on demand. Sport anxiety can be **somatic** (involving physical cues like increased heart rate, sweaty hands and stiff muscles) or **cognitive** (such as worry, distractibility and self-criticism). Athletes can learn to manage both types of anxiety in order maintain a consistent level of "activation" and achieve their Ideal Performance State.

**Goal Setting.** An athlete's outcome goals (e.g., making a team, or winning a ribbon) must always be supported by clear performance goals (e.g, improving batting average). Performance goals can be thought of as the steps of a staircase that lead to achievement of the outcome goal. Goals should be set following the **SMART** principle: make them **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-Bound. It is important to set goals for both training and competition (consider how much time is spent training compared to competing!) and to set both short-term and long-term goals.

**Refocusing Plans.** Athletes developed personalized refocusing strategies to help them remain calm and in control, and to avoid being "thrown off" by distractions or errors in performance. Effective refocusing strategies will require a strong awareness of an athlete's typical response to personal errors and the competitive environment. Athletes must understand their usual response to these distractions or difficult situations, and develop a preferred response, or a new, more effective way to manage these circumstances.