

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
DEPARTEMNT OF SPORTS MEDICINE
SPORT PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

MENTAL SKILLS INVENTORY FOR RUTGERS STUDENT-ATHLETES
(developed by and copyrighted to: Dr. Charlie Maher, 2004)

This inventory is adapted from one that I have used successfully with professional athletes over the years in baseball, basketball, football, tennis, boxing, and other sports.

For the most part, the professional athletes who have used this inventory have found it to be a valuable learning experience for them.

The inventory is not a research tool. Rather, it is provided as a service to you in order to help you become more aware of your strong points, adequacies, and limitations with respect to the mental side of your sport, as a Rutgers student-athlete.

There are 12 mental skills domains that comprise this inventory. How skilled you are in each of these domains can contribute to your development and performance as an athlete or detract from it.

Read the questions that are associated with each of the 12 mental domains. Then, provide an overall rating for each of the domains, using this scale:

- 8- totally locked in; superior in all respects
- 7- doing a very good job, although not superior
- 6- good, but I can still get better
- 5-satisfactory, but inconsistent
- 4- less than satisfactory and quite inconsistent
- 3- poor, and really need to improve my consistency
- 2- very poor and problematic
- 1-totally not locked in and very problematic

Be brutally honest with your ratings in each of the areas. In this sense, do not disrespect yourself by glossing over the areas and not evaluating yourself accurately. Take as much time as you need to read and rate each area.

Once you have completed rating all 12 mental domains, go to the next page. It will explain how you can use your ratings as a basis for constructing a mental plan for yourself.

Best regards,

Dr. Charlie Maher

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___ 1. **PERSPECTIVE:** How are you at balancing the demands of your sport with your academics and the other important aspects of your life? Are you able to schedule and organize your time effectively in these areas? Do you tend to put off doing important things that have real meaning to you? Are you able to step back and see the big picture of what you are doing in your sport and in academics and why?

___ 2. **PERSONAL AWARENESS:** How much do you really understand about yourself as an athlete, student, and person? Are you really aware of your strong points and limitations in these areas, especially the mental and emotional areas? To what degree are you accurate in an evaluation of yourself?

___ 3. **SELF-MOTIVATION:** How are you with respect to setting goals for your development and performance as athlete? Do you have a clear vision of what you want to accomplish in your sport? Are you aiming at goals that are specific and attainable for you and your role?

___ 4. **MENTAL DISCIPLINE:** How are you with respect to being able to follow through with a game plan? Do you have a pre competition routine that gets you ready to compete? Can you stick with it? Are you susceptible to distractions that take you away from your plan?

___ 5. **SELF-CONFIDENCE:** How are you at believing in your ability to execute and to get the job done, “between the lines”, in your sport? Are you able to envision what you want to accomplish in the upcoming games or competition? Do you have times when you doubt yourself and when you do not trust your abilities as an athlete?

___ 6. **EMOTIONAL INTENSITY:** How are you at being able to compete at an effective level of intensity? Can you start the game or begin the competition with a good degree of energy? Does your intensity wane as the contest proceeds? Do you possess a tendency to get over-intense or too laid back?

___ 7. **FOCUS:** How are you at paying attention to the process of competing? Are you able to focus on the process and not think about results? Do things that are beyond your control easily distract you? Can you re-group quickly when you lose your concentration?

___ 8. **COMPOSURE:** How are you at remaining poised under competitive pressure? Can you stay calm in clutch situations in your sport? Do you have a tendency to become anxious during competition? Are you able to recognize when you are losing your composure? Can you quickly regroup when this occurs?

___ 9. **TEAMWORK:** How are you at being a member of a team? Can you interact productively with fellow team members? How do you get along with coaches? Have you been able to communicate your needs and feelings respectfully as a member of a team? Are you an asset or liability to the team?

___ 10. **SELF ESTEEM:** How are you at keeping your self on an even keel, no matters what your results? Do you tend to get a big head and over inflate your value when things are going well with your performance? Do you get down on yourself when your performance is less than expected?

___ 11. **PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:** How are you at taking responsibility for your performance? Are you able to review your performance in a step-by-step manner? Can you identify and separate out the factors that have affected your performance? Can you recognize the factors that are within your control and deal with them? Do you tend to deny performance shortcomings? Are you a finger pointer?

___ 12. **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** How are you at using information about yourself to get better as an athlete? Are you able to make adjustments and changes to your game? Are you always seeking methods and procedures to develop your skills as an athlete?

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HOW TO CONSIDER YOUR RATINGS

This inventory is an educational and self-awareness tool for your use about the mental side of your sport.

The following are some steps and guidelines that you can use in learning more about your mental approach to your sport, based on your ratings.

In addition, you also are encouraged to discuss your ratings and your consideration of them with a staff member from the Rutgers Sport Psychology Program and/or with one of your coaches.

1. Take each one of your ratings in each of the 12 mental skills domains and, before you proceed, make sure that you have been an honest as you are aware of with respect to your ratings. If you find that you may not have been as honest as you could have been with any of the ratings, go back and provide a new rating, where applicable.
2. If you have given yourself a rating of “7 or 8” for a domain, you are encouraged to review what you have been doing in that area that warrants this kind of level of rating. In this respect, write down things such as the use of specific methods, procedures, routines, readings, discussions with coaches and other people. In essence, for these levels of rating, you want to be clear with yourself about what you are doing, why, and how.
3. If you have given yourself a rating of “5 or 6” for a domain, you are encouraged to review the probable reasons for the inconsistencies. Often, these reasons will have to do with negative thoughts and feelings. Or, there may be specific times and situations when you have been inconsistent with respect to the area.
4. If you have give yourself a rating of “3 or 4” for a domain, you also are encouraged to review reasons for the inconsistencies and the poor ratings. In addition, you are encouraged to have someone else who knows you as an athlete complete the inventory on you and then discuss their ratings with you for similarities and discrepancies..
5. If you have given yourself a rating of “1 or 2” for a domain, you are encouraged to discuss that area with someone whom you know and can trust and analyze reasons and possible causes.

6. When you have considered all of your ratings, you can use the information to profile the mental side of your sport, In this respect you can do the following:
 - (a) identify your mental strong points (areas where you have rated yourself as a 7 and 8 :
 - (b) identify your mental adequacies (areas with ratings of 5 and 6); and
 - (c) identify your mental limitations (areas with rating of 1,2,3, and 4).
7. For your mental strong points, you can continue doing what you have been doing in the area.
8. For your mental adequacies, you can strive to reduce the inconsistencies with respect to the area with professional advice and coaching.
9. For your mental limitations, you can develop a written plan for yourself, with professional advice and coaching.

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