

MVFC Coach Development Workshop #7

Practical Mental Skills – Gareth Turnbull, with Dan Abrahams

Tuesday Aug 18th 5pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85267922240>

RECORDING - <https://youtu.be/o5oNcgEpanE>

THEME: To introduce the MVFC coaches into some back ground and subject matter expert (Dan Abraham) work around Mental Skills. Aim to make the coaches aware of the need to develop their own understanding of developing the mental corner of athlete development, provide them with some practical tools (skills) to test out and to motivate them to do further reading or research on the areas.

STRUCTURE:

- a. Intro – GTs background in reading, uses of and interest in developing the sport psych, practical mental skills for developing athletes & coaches
- b. Presentation of 12 Skills, based of Dan Abrahams work / book, NZ All Blacks and other personal research.
- c. Provide recommendations of additional reading.
- d. Q&A?

RESEARCH LINKS:

The effectiveness of mental practice, motor simulation, and visualization for technical skill development is supported by extensive scientific literature.

Academic Research & Literature Meta-Analyses

- **Broad Performance Gains:** A comprehensive meta-analysis on the [Effects of Imagery Practice on Athletes' Performance \(PMC\)](#) reviewed 86 studies involving over 3,500 athletes. The findings show that consistent imagery practices drastically enhance agility, muscle strength, and specific technical skills. [1]
- **Optimal Integration:** Research in the [Effects of Imagery Interventions in Sports \(Taylor & Francis\)](#) demonstrates that combining physical practice with structural motor imagery yields the most substantial skill retention and performance post-tests. [1]
- **Beyond the Target Movement:** A recent study on [Motor Imagery's Neurocognitive Foundation \(PNAS\)](#) proves that mental rehearsal facilitates the learning of not only targeted individual actions but also sequentially linked overt physical movements. It highlights a strict functional equivalence between imagined and physically executed actions. [1]
- **Neuroplasticity Integration:** As detailed in [To Move Without Moving \(PMC\)](#), motor imagery activates motor networks with near-physical fidelity. It serves as a core neurocognitive mechanism that reshapes the body by preparing action in cognition first. [1]

Dan Abrahams' Frameworks & Resources

Dan Abrahams is a prominent global sport psychologist who heavily integrates mental imagery, memory, and cognitive simulation into practical frameworks for elite sports. [1]

- **The Core Platform:** You can explore his overall techniques, accreditation details, and philosophy directly via the official [Dan Abrahams Homepage](#). [1]
- **The Intentional Training Model:** Abrahams heavily relies on cognitive rehearsal through his [Intentional Training Model Blog](#). This model underscores that technical mastery requires training to be "internalised"—meaning players must mentally self-reflect and visually map out actions alongside physical repetitions. [1]
- **The Triad of Confidence:** In his specialized insights on [Memory, Imagination, and Perception \(LinkedIn\)](#), Abrahams breaks down how questioning an athlete's imagination ("What would others see if you played a 10/10 game?") physically triggers the technical blueprint needed for elite execution. [1]
- **Mental Playbooks:** For structured application guides, Abrahams' published works, such as *Soccer Tough* and *Compete*, offer practical blueprints. These can be found on his [Sport Psychology Books Page](#). [1, 2]
- **Audio Discussions:** For expert interviews regarding the intersection of neuroscience and elite sports performance, you can tune into his podcast via [The Sport Psych Show on Apple Podcasts](#). [1, 2]