

Psychological essentials for a competitive team

Eight essential psychological approaches to creating a more competitive team with more competitive individuals:

Here they are:

1. Retrieval practice:

After team meetings and during/after training sessions...checking and testing understanding of the tactical plan/game model to increase understanding

2. Shared mental models:

More conversations across the team (as well as strong session design) in pairs, small groups and larger groups in order to develop a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities; as well as a shared understanding of how each players sees the game

3. Game pre-mortem:

In order to speed and refine anticipation and decision-making, conversations about the game around what-ifs can be a critical essential

4. Goal orientation:

help players develop specific and controllable objectives that enable them to be task-oriented (alongside any kind of performance objectives)

5. Approach behaviours:

engage behavioural activation by helping players execute behaviours and actions with 'energy forward'. The positive and proactive execution of actions is the antithesis of hesitancy and inhibition (which are two of the biggest killers of performance)

6. Pictorial metaphors:

huge chunks of information can be squeezed into simple pictorial metaphors that can be embodied and enacted...for example, being a strong upbeat lion

7. Attention-control:

aim to help players stay connected to the game (to team mates and opposition) by making sure their task-oriented cues are externally driven (that exploit visual information as it emerges and dissolves)

8. Post-mortem feedback loops:

a mark out of 10 for performance and a mark out of 10 for mindset can be a useful subjective scaling protocol that can start conversation, deliberate practice for training, and game cues for the next match