For your convenience, this Guidebook contains all the handouts for...

The

SOFTBALL COACH'S

Guide to

MENTAL TRAINING

KEN RAVIZZA
Sport Psych Consultant, Cal State Fullerton, U.S. National Softball Team

JEFF JANSSEN
Peak Performance Consultant, University of Arizona National Champions 1991, 93, 94, 96, 97
1. **Dare to dream.**
   Champions envision great possibilities for themselves. They think ahead to create an exciting, motivating, and satisfying future.

2. **Define and commit to a mission.**
   Champions clearly specify what they want to achieve. This mission provides them with a purpose for everything they do. Champions make a full commitment to do whatever it takes to achieve their mission, making it a top priority in their life.

3. **Set daily goals.**
   Champions break down their mission into specific, controllable challenges that they set on a daily and weekly basis. They consistently strive to take themselves to the next level by setting high yet realistic expectations. Champions demand their best, emphasizing quality over quantity.

4. **Control the controllables.**
   Champions understand the difference between what they can and cannot control. They take full responsibility for what they can control and learn to accept and work around the uncontrollables.

5. **Choose to think helpful thoughts.**
   Champions realize that they have the power to choose how they think and feel which ultimately determines how they perform. They discipline their minds to consistently think helpful, constructive, and positive thoughts versus hurtful, destructive, and negative thoughts. Their Mental Game dictates the situation rather than letting the situation determine their Mental Game.

6. **Choose and cultivate confidence.**
   Champions choose to be confident by focusing on their strengths and the reasons they deserve to be successful. They thrive on "pressure" situations because they actively put their mind in a position to be successful.

7. **Focus on the present/positive/process.**
   Champions focus on the present moment - taking plays and games one at a time. They focus on the process of training and competing realizing that if they can take care of the present process, the desired outcome will take care of itself.

8. **Trust themselves.**
   Champions trust their preparation and their abilities when it comes time to compete. They go out and just do what they have trained themselves to do.

9. **Recognize and overcome adversity.**
   Champions recognize what things and situations are tough for them to handle and detail plans to effectively cope with them. Instead of giving up, pouting, or making excuses, Champions work through adversity by trying harder and smarter.

10. **Evaluate their performances.**
    Champions invest the time to constructively evaluate their training and performances. They reflect on highlights to build confidence, learn lessons from mistakes, and set goals for the future.
Fundamentals of The Mental Game

1. Take responsibility for your thoughts and actions.

2. Be on a mission: know why you play your sport, what character traits you want to possess, and what you want to accomplish in it.

3. Make your daily actions consistent with your mission.

4. Perform one moment at a time: confident and focused on each moment as it is played with disregard for past or future moments.

5. Focus on the process of playing the game rather than the outcomes of your performance.

6. Realize that you can’t control what happens around you but you can control your response to it, and that you must be in control of yourself before you can control your performance.

7. Develop your mental skills so you can consistently perform near the best of your ability and have “something to go to” when adversity strikes.

8. Practice what you are going to do in your performance.

9. Learn each day.

10. Keep it simple, smart.
COMMITMENT

If you are committed to becoming a better coach, take the time to write out the answers in the space provided below. There's a big difference between coaches who are just interested in improving and coaches who are committed to improving.

1. What do you enjoy about the game?

2. If you were told this was the last season you were going to be able to coach, what attitude would you choose to take each day?

3. What attitudes displayed by other coaches impress you the most?

4. Whom do you consider to be your coaching role models/mentors and what did you learn from them?

5. What makes you feel that way about them?
COACHES FEEDBACK

1. List three things you learned about yourself as a coach last season.

2. List three things you learned last year to make yourself a better coach.

3. What did you enjoy last year as a coach?

4. List three things you learned last season about the mental aspects of softball.

5. What mental skills did you use last season to stay focused, think clearly, and control your emotions in the heat of battle?

6. List three things you need to focus your attention on this year to improve as a coach. (technical, strategic, psychological)

7. When you retire from coaching what do you want people to say about you as a coach?
COMPARING BEST VS. WORST COACHING EXPERIENCES

Write your response to each question as it relates to your Best coaching performance in practice and/or a game and your response as it relates to your Worst performance.

1. Who were you competing against?

Best:

Worst:

2. What were your thoughts before the game?

Best:

Worst:

3. What were you thinking or saying to yourself at the time?

Best:

Worst:

4. How would you describe your emotional state at the time?

Best:

Worst:

5. What was your focus like at the time?

Best:

Worst:

6. What, if anything, was different about your experience at the time?

Best:

Worst:

Compare your two sets of responses. What are the difference in your mental approach to your best and worst performances?
CONTROLLING THE CONTROLLABLES

Gaining self control is crucial to developing your Mental Game. A key to self control is learning the difference between concerns beyond your control and the things you can control. Use this sheet to list everything you cannot control (uncontrollables) and can control (controllables) when you are practicing and competing. Champions focus their thoughts and energies on the things that they can control.

How will I respond to concerns outside of my control?

How will I take charge of things that I can control?

It is in controlling the controllables that you control your success.
THREE “P’s” OF PROPER FOCUS

Champions know how to properly focus their Mental Game. They focus on the three “P’s” - the present-positive-process. Distractions happen when you focus too much on the past/future, the negative things you want to avoid, or focusing on the outcome while forgetting the process. Use this sheet to help you learn how to focus on the present-positive-process as you train and compete.

Champions focus on the present moment - ignoring the past problems and not worrying about the future.

**past**

What past problems could distract me?

**present**

How will I focus on the present?

**future**

What future concerns could distract me?

Champions focus on the positive things they want to do instead of the negative things they want to avoid.

**positive**

What are the positive things I want to do?

**negative**

What negative things should I ignore?

Champions focus on the process that leads to the outcomes they want.

**outcome**

How might focusing only on the outcome distract me?

**process**

What is the process of achieving the outcome I want?

Proper focus depends on taking care of the present-positive-process.
STRENGTHENING YOUR CONFIDENCE

Confidence is something that can be created and strengthened. Confidence is simply a choice. It is disciplining yourself to create and focus on the reasons why you can and should be successful. Use this sheet to help you strengthen your confidence.

What are my physical and mental strengths?

What things have I accomplished so far that make me proud?

What kinds of practicing, training, and overall preparation have I done that give me the right to feel confident?

What have other people said or done that has built my confidence?

One person with confidence is a majority.
THE MENTAL GAME

TWO RULES:

1. You have to be in control of yourself before you can have control of your performance.

2. You have very little control over those things around you, but you do have control over how you choose to respond to them.

THE R'S

RESPONSIBILITY
Take responsibility for your own actions.

RESPOND
(JUST DO IT!)

READY
It's time to stop thinking and trust your training. Stay positive.

RELAX
Take a deep breath.

REFOCUS
What do you have to do right now?

RECOGNIZE
Become aware of when you are stressed out or are using negative self-talk.

RELEASE
Get rid of the stress or negative thought(s) using a physical cue.

REGROUP
Pull your chest and head up. Play with positive body language.
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ken Ravizza, Ph.D.
One of the world's most respected consultants, Ken Ravizza has worked with thousands of coaches and athletes from the youth levels to professionals and Olympic medalists. He has worked with the Anaheim Angels and other professional sports teams and currently serves as the Sport Psych Consultant for the U.S. National Softball Team.

For more information on Ken's consulting, speaking, and products, you can contact him at:

Ken Ravizza
Kinesis
210 Via Los Altos
Redondo Beach, CA 90277

Phone: (310) 791-0166
Fax: (310) 373-2776

Jeff Janssen, M.S.
Called "Arizona's Secret Weapon," Jeff Janssen has helped the Arizona Softball team become one of the nation's elite softball programs, winning five National Championships. A popular speaker at schools and clinics nationwide, Janssen has authored and co-authored numerous articles, books, and videos on peak performance and championship team building.

For more information on Jeff's consulting, speaking, and products, you can contact him at:

Jeff Janssen
Winning The Mental Game
8898 E. Desert Lavender Place
Tucson, AZ 85715

Phone: 1-888-721-TEAM
Fax: (520) 886-4983
www.u.arizona.edu/~jjanssen