

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHAMPION

*Think about the following issues / ideas presented in no particular order.
Some of these issues overlap ... these and other ideas can guide you to improved performance.
Try to think of, and talk about examples where you have encountered each issue.*

Your Relationship with your Coach

1. Aim to understand your sport by asking why things are done in a particular way.
2. Trust your coach. Consider what is said is correct unless you have contrary evidence; and then, be willing to discuss differences.
3. Discuss your sport and your feelings about your progress with your coach; make decisions together.
4. Do not accept things blindly, but follow the coach's guidance; give the program a chance to work.
5. When asked to try new things, apply yourself fully.
6. Request that your coach tell you privately when you have done something wrong, or could improve your endeavour.

In Summary: COMMUNICATE; LEARN; TRUST.

Focus on Your Sport

1. Don't be absent-minded or forgetful about details about your sport or training.
2. Be enthusiastic ... it's contagious.
3. Don't miss training. Establish your training as a priority and stick to it.
4. Be truthful when you describe your training and performances .. in your diary; to your coach.
5. Look for reasons rather than excuses to explain outcomes in training and competition.
6. Understand that the only performance you can influence is YOUR performance; focus on producing YOUR best.
7. Enjoy training and competition.
8. Strive for better performances in training and in competition.
9. Keep all equipment well-organised and in good condition, ready for use.
10. Be sure to take all required items to all sessions ... ready to use when you arrive.
11. Learn about your sport ... books, magazines, videos, internet. Seek help from your coach.

Reactions (When things go wrong)

1. Forget awkward social mistakes.
2. Calm down quickly when upset by something involving your sport.
3. Don't brood over problems or mistakes ... in sport; in life.
4. Learn from your mistakes ... let them guide you to better things.
5. Compete for yourself.
6. Discipline yourself (learn) so that you can train by yourself (if necessary) provided that adequate directions are given by the coach.
7. Understand that watching your diet is important.
8. Do not break team rules or regulations.
9. Be conscientious in all matters ... always do that little bit extra.

In Summary: DEDICATION; COMMITMENT TO SELF; REALISM & HONESTY.

Pre-Competition Factors

1. Be prepared to put more intensity into training than competition (when necessary); training challenges and your reactions to these challenges should exceed those found in competition.
2. Plan your preparation for competition in detail ... well in advance.
3. Develop an alternative plan for when things do not go as you would like in warm-up or competition; *plan for everything to go wrong and plan and prepare accordingly.*
4. Warm-up by yourself; don't be distracted by others; develop and stick to a routine that suits YOU.
5. Do not worry about your opponents: the only performance you can influence is YOURS.
6. Be prepared for the nerves and tension before a performance; a set routine helps here.
7. Control your excitement and tension by picturing what you will be doing in competition.
8. Just before the competition starts, concentrate on how well you will do and "feel" the initial stages of the competition.
9. Determine a realistic goal for your performance.
10. Do not let unusual events or happenings upset or distract you.

Let's look at **Donovan Bailey** .. W.R. 100m, Atlanta Olympics, 1996
Comment on the distractions he overcame to win and set a world record.

In Summary: BE INDIVIDUAL; BE PREPARED; FOCUS;
MENTALLY REHEARSE BEFORE COMPETITION.

Competition Factors

1. Be prepared to "take the lead" or dominate early no matter what the cost.
2. Do not save yourself for "a good finishing effort".
3. As fatigue develops, focus and concentrate on the prepared plan.
4. Always do you best, even though winning is not always possible. Never perform at a level less than your best.
5. Every competition should be seen as an opportunity for you to do better than ever before.
6. Think only of your performance in competition.
7. Do not be upset by officiating. Accept the things you cannot change.
8. Use interruptions in a positive way; apply your prepared strategies, retain your focus.
9. The more important the competition, the more enjoyable it should be.
10. Use information gained from each competition to modify and plan for the next.

In Summary: MAXIMISE EFFORT; CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO IMPROVE;
INCREASE CONCENTRATION AS THE EVENT PROGRESSES;
USE PLANNED STRATEGIES; ENJOY TESTING YOURSELF.

Note! There are many other issues that will challenge you.
Thinking and talking about those we have outlined will help you prepare
better and perform better.

Remember: ***BY FAILING TO PREPARE YOU ARE PREPARING TO FAIL***