

# PERFORMANCE ON A PAGE

THE CONCEPTS YOU'LL FIND USEFUL TO KNOW

## PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

Performance is "doing the things you need to do to get the results you want."

Results are the outcomes that you want.

## PERFORMANCE READINESS

Performance Readiness is what you focus on to give you the best chance of being fully prepared to do the things you need to do to get the results you want.

Performance Readiness is made up of:

Technical Readiness (the skills and knowledge you need to ensure you're ready to perform)

Tactical Readiness (the ability to use the skills and knowledge in the right way at the right time in different situations, so you're ready to perform)

Physical Readiness (having the energy to be able to perform consistently within your environment)

Mental Readiness (knowing you've prepared your thinking to give you the best chance of performing effectively)

Emotional Readiness (you feel supported to perform by the people that are important to you at home and work)

Contextual Readiness (you feel ready to perform as a result of the physical and social environment that you work in - from ergonomics & equipment to the mood in the camp)

## MOTIVATION

Motivation is the CORE DRIVE that fuels your performance. It's made up of your sense of Control, Confidence and Connectedness.

Control is all about a sense of choice in what you do. Confidence is all about your belief you have what it takes. Connectedness is all about knowing and feeling you're part of a collective mission, something more than just you.



# What you get when you obsessively focus on just RESULTS...

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Slow  
Decision  
Making



Me first,  
team  
second,  
thinking



Increased  
likelihood of short  
cuts or unethical  
behaviours in  
order to get results



Quick to  
blame and  
take credit



No Risk  
Taking



People  
playing not  
to lose



A culture of  
fragile  
confidence



Slow to  
admit  
mistakes



## Understanding Performance

Elite athletes spend most of their time training to perform and they're supported by a team of coaches and performance experts whose job is to help them get even better.

So whether you like sport or hate it, a star or last to be picked, if you're serious about fulfilling your potential, when it comes to understanding performance, it's the place to go.

### High performance headlines

- Elite performers obsess about what they need to do to get better. Businesses obsess about results.
- Elite performers get better by focusing on improving 6 elements of their performance - their technical ability, their tactical nous, their physical energy, their attitude/mindset, the context or environment they're performing in and in how they use support.
- If you think bigger than just working on your technical ability or tactical nous, you're on the path to making some big improvements to your performance. And to your results.

### You've had the headlines, now get the detail.

Think of a world where you spend most of your time training to perform and occasionally put your work to the test. That's pretty much the world of professional sport. As a result, there's been a huge amount of time, money and effort invested into understanding what influences human performance and then applying that science to improve it.

Then think of a world where you spend the majority of your time performing and only occasionally have time to train. Experience tells us that's the world of work, where there's a big focus on results and little understanding of the science of human performance. As a result, the art and science of performance is being ignored or lip service is paid to make everyone feel better. Not great if you want to get better results and to get them more consistently.

Athletes know that performance is all about doing the things that they need to do to get the results they want. It's a never-ending journey of understanding and action - making sure they know what result they want and then working on 6 key performance components to get there. They also know it's a matter of choice - that **they're in control** of the amount of energy and effort they put into working on those 6 things. They know that

by working on them, they'll get the result they want in the end. There's a bit of delayed gratification about it because often there's not an immediate return on their investment, but they trust they'll get there because they're certain that they're doing the right things.

## Six key components

So what are these 6 components? The obvious ones, and the ones that populate most people's CV's are the **technical** and **tactical** elements of performance. Everyone goes to great lengths to outline their qualifications, skills and experience, and the key achievements that showed how well they were used. These first two components of performance are essential - without them, you won't stand much of a chance of being any good.

Technical and tactical abilities are very strong in the best performers, but they don't just focus on improving these. Partly that's because as you get better at what you do, it's tougher to get big breakthroughs in technical skills or tactical thinking. So focusing on the other 4 components - physical, mental, emotional and contextual - can deliver big performance improvements and dramatically better results.

All great athletes know that the **physical** component of performance is a non-negotiable. The same is true for performance at work. Just deprive yourself of sleep, good nutrition, water and your health for a few days and see what an impact that makes. You don't have to be a gym rat to be great at work, but you do need to make sure you're fit for the hours you're working and the demands you face. Ignore this area and you're ignoring something that could have a huge benefit for your performance.

Elite athletes also know that the **mental** component of performance might mean the difference between winning and losing. So they work hard to make sure their confidence is high, their concentration is focused whatever of the conditions and that any worry and pressure are under control. Choose to ignore the mental component and again you're also choosing to ignore one of the things that makes the difference between good and great.

All athletes know the importance of the **emotional** component of performance; the support team who help them win. They value and use that support because they know it's part of their winning recipe. If you're isolated and expecting to be able to do everything yourself, then when the pressure's on, you're putting yourself at a disadvantage compared to others who get the support they need.

Finally, the **context** within which you perform is really important. This boils down to whether you have the right equipment around you to do what you need to and your environment is spot on in terms of the mood and attitude.



## THE PERFORMANCE ROOM

If you haven't got the right equipment, the mood and attitude that surrounds you becomes even more important can you be the world's best at performing with the level of equipment you do have and the people around you? You may not have total control over this, but you've probably got some, and you've got 100% choice about the attitude you have towards your playing conditions.

The evidence is compelling, but is the risk to change too great for you? Surely the real risk is to remain stuck to a definition of performance that means you are at risk of underperforming.

**Is that a risk worth taking?**

## **Performance, not results, the world over!**

The Australian Olympic Team were sitting 4th in the Medal Standings after day 6 and sports mad Aussies couldn't get enough of the first week of the 2016 Olympics. Australia has always been strong in swimming and the country's best chances of winning medals have traditionally been in the pool. (We have to admit here in Aus (not surprisingly), that it's always nice for an Australian team to be ahead of a GB team!)

### **It's all about the process!**

While the Media and sports loving population in Australia have been enjoying this early medal success, John Bertrand, America's Cup Skipper and Australian sailing Icon, now Chairman and President of Swimming Australia, is less forthcoming in making medal predictions;

"In the lead-up to Rio, we haven't talked about medal counts. We purely talk about peak performance. Globally, 80 per cent of swimmers achieve their peak performance at their Olympic selection trials. Only 20 per cent have hit their peak at the Olympics, when it really counts.

"How do we change that 20 per cent to 40 per cent and so on? How do we de-pressurise the situation so they can have their peak performance? It is about process, process, process. You have to enjoy the process, the environment of the team and there has to be that sense of trust and happiness."

That's a great message - trust and happiness from commitment to a process, and we know the origins of that kind of thinking.

### **Matching an obsession with performance, with an obsession with results**

As has been said many times before, Olympic athletes spend most of their time training and very little time competing, so each day they must think about what they need to do to get better. Contrast this with the world of work where it feels like a competition every day and everyone's focused on 'to-do lists' much more than 'to improve lists'.

When you train more than you compete you have to choose where to focus your effort, and that's where the power of the "process" focus referred to by John Bertrand, comes into play. A choice to be as prepared as possible, as performance ready as possible, by priming all the sources of readiness we so often talk about.



The athletes also understand the required dual focus and obsession on readiness to perform as well as on results (PB's, finals & medals) - after all, they're hugely competitive people, driven to win. This competitive fire is combined with desire to prepare better than everyone else, which opens up a more powerful approach than simply obsessing on the final result.

When 18 year old Aussie swimmer Kyle Chalmers was interviewed after his second place in the Semi Final of the 100 metre freestyle, he simply said that his focus was to practice the first 50 metres so that he could improve for the final. He didn't get drawn into result prediction. As we know he won gold in the final.

## How are you performing?

The Olympics gives us a great opportunity to connect back to our most important ideas and see that when it matters most, a 'performance' focus is a great source of trust.

Are you following the lead of the Olympians? Have you checked in with both the results you're passionate about achieving combined with a huge commitment to following the process you know gives you the best chance of getting there?

Have you recently taken stock of your full performance recipe and made sure that it's fit for purpose to provide you with the readiness you need to keep progressing with confidence?

Have you checked how you're measuring performance recently to ensure you're using the goals and data available to you to fuel your drive and confidence?

The evidence of elite athletes describing their performance approach in the most important moments of their career is compelling and as always is a great reminder to follow their lead and see how well we can all translate the simple messages of high performance sport into an often more complex world that we all compete in.