Sport Psychology References
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Important points about imagery and imagery training
Revised from *Coaches Guide to Sport Psychology* by Rainer Martens.

1. Imagery is a skill that most athletes have not sufficiently developed through systematic training.

2. Imagery is an experience, similar to a sensory experience, but arising in the absence of the usual external stimuli.

3. Imagery is polysensory, involving not only the visual sense, but the auditory, olfactory, tactile, and kinesthetic senses.

4. Imagery is useful in practicing motor skills and developing psychological skills.

5. Both experiential and scientific evidence demonstrate the power of imagery in helping athletes develop physical and psychological skills.

6. We are not exactly certain why motor imagery works—whether through minute neural firings in the muscles or symbolic coding of patterns in the central nervous system—but it does work by helping to develop a mental blueprint.

7. Athletes should initially practice imagery in a distraction-free environment.

8. Athletes will benefit more when practicing imagery in a relaxed but attentive state.

9. Coaches and athletes need to have reasonable expectations about how fast imagery skills can be learned and what imagery can do to help athletes.

10. The most important element of imagery training is to practice systematically.

11. Imagery appears to be less helpful in learning new motor skills than in helping to refine developing motor skills.

12. Imagery offers advantages for practicing sports skills in that motor imagery training can be practiced when athletes are physically fatigued, when facilities or equipment are inaccessible, or when athletes are injured. In addition, motor imagery training provides a change of pace from physical practice.

13. Athletes should image not only the performance, but the outcome of the performance, rewarding themselves when they are successful.

14. Using slow motion imagery may be helpful in refining skills.

15. Triggers may be useful to stimulate vivid imagery.

16. Videotape augmented motor imagery is recommended to improve the performance of complex sports skills.