

U16 Female NW Team – Pre-Game Preparation & Dealing with Distractions

Below are some examples of distractions and strategies to help you deal with those distractions.

Identify four distractions which your athletes could face and apply the appropriate competition strategies.	
<p>In our sport we are required to travel in bad weather conditions and for long durations.</p>	<p>The "Pre-Game" Strategy is used to ensure that athletes do not just show up at the rink with only a few minutes to spare, get dressed and jump on the ice. There is no way that the athlete will be able to reach their "IPS" with this lack of pre-game preparation. We encourage parents to plan ahead and allow themselves enough time to travel to and from the event, safely. We also encourage parents to travel in groups; not everyone is driving a new vehicle. If possible, we ask that they leave the night before.</p> <p>The players job is to get prepared to play hockey. They should be thinking about nutrition, hydration, thinking about their pre-game plan and the best way to get them ready to compete. The mental side of the plan can be worked on while travelling but the physical side of the plan needs to be done once they arrive. The athlete will be stiff from sitting in a vehicle for a long period of time; The pre-game warm-up and pre-game activation will be necessary.</p>
<p>Waking up in the morning feeling "Blah", you have a major exam on Monday and haven't had enough time to prepare and you have just had an argument with your parents.</p>	<p>This "Pre-game" Strategy should start out with positive self-talk. i.e.. I feel good this morning, today is going to be a great day, today is going to be "My" day etc. As the athlete starts to wake up they should try to smile, it makes you feel good! The athlete should pick up their training journal and review their goals. They should recite their positive self-talk phrases again. "I'm good, I will have a great game, I believe in myself and my teammates, we are going to kick butt!" etc.</p> <p>The athlete should make sure that they are eating and hydrating; remember, the right amounts of the right foods at the right time! The athlete should check their gear, making sure that they haven't forgotten anything; you do not want any 1st minute surprises that can cause your mental focus to be derailed. This will allow the athlete to relax and start working on pre-game mental preparation - get into the "ZONE" (reach your IPS).</p>
<p>You walk into the rink and find out that the team you are about to play, has beaten their previous opponent by 20 goals.</p>	<p>This "Pre-game" Strategy starts with getting into your IPS. You have to focus on the team tactics and strategies and not worry about what the other team did; they could have played a really weak team. This is where the athlete starts to focus on themselves and the team. If you are feeling nervous start working on positive self-talk, work on relaxation techniques to help you calm down. Once the negative thoughts have been replaced with positive thoughts you can progress to energizing (stimulating) yourself to get your activation level up. You may want to visualize yourself holding the tournament MVP award or holding up a team trophy at the end of the competition.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Start thinking about the "Process of Winning" don't worry about the outcome of the game; if you do all of the little things right and compete hard the result will come. Your job is to prepare yourself to play your best - get into the "Zone" (your IPS) and get ready to play your best! You know that your team controls its own destiny! Think about team tactics, strategies, systems - be ready to do your job!</p>
<p>Your best player has just been ejected from the game for a hit from behind and the game is tied.</p>	<p>This "Game" Strategy is all about refocusing and getting back to your IPS as quickly as possible. At this moment you will have mixed emotions. Your emotions will range from anger, helplessness, despair etc. But you have to remember "HOCKEY IS A TEAM GAME"; one player does not make a team. If everyone else steps up their game, you can compensate for the loss of one player.</p> <p>It will be up to the coaches to get everyone to calm down and to re-focus on the task at hand; you still have a game to finish! You may be asked to take on a new role, perhaps a defenseman may be asked to step up and play as a forward and try and score.</p> <p>The coaches should get you focused on the task at hand; you have a penalty to kill. You may have to work on positive self-talk on the bench, as an individual or maybe as a team, if everyone is really upset. The sooner you get back to your IPS, the sooner you can play at your best!</p>

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Why do we see NHL players sitting in the stands 3 hours before a game re-taping a stick that doesn't really need new tape? Why do we see that same player a while later, sitting with their eyes closed looking like they are falling asleep in the chair? Why do we see that same player kicking a soccer ball around with his teammates, later? *Every professional player has a routine that they go through pre-game; some have a pre-game nap, all players will have a pre-game meal, pre-hydrate, some work on visualization, some use relaxation techniques to calm themselves, others use activation techniques to "pump" themselves up for the game.*

Everything these players are doing is to prepare them to play their best game. Have you ever had a super good game, where everything that you did was right and the game was awesome? Have you ever heard an athlete say that they were in the "ZONE"? When an athlete has had the "perfect" game they recognise the fact that they were in the "ZONE" or that they had reached their "IPS".

When you see the same athlete doing all of these weird things before the next game, the athlete is trying to recreate what they did before playing that "perfect" game. They are trying to reach their "Ideal Physical State" (IPS) – get into the "ZONE". The "ZONE" or "IPS" is where their mind and body come together to allow them to perform at their highest possible level so that they can have another "perfect" game.

Your pre-game objective should be to get yourself prepared to play at the highest level that you are capable of, get yourself into the "ZONE" or reach your "IPS". However, as we all know there are a lot of distractions pre-game & during a game that can cause us to lose focus and knock us out of the "ZONE". We have to have a plan to get us into the "ZONE" and a plan to keep us in the "ZONE", if we want to play at the highest level we can possibly play at!

What are some of the things that you can do as a player, pre-game, that will allow you to get into the "Zone"? List 10 things.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

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List 5 distractions that you may face at the BC Winter Games and how you will deal with those distractions.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List 5 distractions that we may face, as a team, at the BC Winter Games and how you think we should deal with those distractions.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____