



*Providing information to individuals and teams seeking optimal performance*

## Do You Get It? Part II

In the March issue of *Performance Enhancement News*, we began to examine the meaning of the question, "Does he or she get it?" This question was one of five asked by Jimmy Dykes, ABC college basketball commentator and former pro scout, as he assessed a college basketball player's potential as a professional. Briefly, Dykes defined this quality as being willing to do the extras, such as being in the gym early and working after practice, in order to improve his or her game.

I noted in the last newsletter, that the most likely mental skills associated with the notion of "getting it" include goal setting, making choices, preparation, effort, and commitment. Finally, we examined goal setting and making choices in some detail. The March issue can be downloaded from our website. The present newsletter will finish the discussion of "getting it" by focusing on preparation, effort, and commitment.

### *Preparation*

The next aspect of "getting it" includes proper preparation. The most obvious form of preparation is the physical type. This includes working out to improve strength and endurance and practicing to improve technique and execution. Team workouts also help the team work as a unit.

Less obvious ways to physically prepare include proper nutrition and hydration so that your body will have the appropriate fuel to allow it to work efficiently and to get stronger. Including appropriate recovery after training allows your body to adjust as it gets stronger. An appropriate recovery period also helps to prevent overuse injuries which are likely to slow down your preparation progress. Getting adequate sleep will also help your body to recover. Finally, proper physical preparation includes avoiding substance abuse as this can also have a negative impact on preparation progress.

Finally, proper preparation also includes mental preparation. This means being prepared to implement the game plan for the upcoming competition. It also means practicing your mental skills regimen and integrating the mental skills you use into your practices in order to get the most out of both.

### *Effort*

The fourth aspect of the mental components that make up "getting it" is effort. You do not have true control over many things. For instance, you have absolutely no control over the effort others put in to meeting their goals which, in the athletic arena, usually includes working toward being better than you. You also do not have control over things such as bad calls by a referee or what the weather does. However, you have absolute control over the effort you put in to both practice and competition. In fact, if you think about it, you are the *only* person who can control the amount of effort you put into your actions.

A question I will often ask the athletes that I work with is "Are you practicing like you want to play?" Most athletes play hard and use most if not all of their energy in their quest to win in competition. However, it is much less common to see an athlete practicing with the same intensity. You may know an athlete who either does not show up to practice consistently or does not put in much effort during practice. He or she may even be a superior athlete who plays well during games regardless of how he or she practices.

As you think about the athletes you know or know of that only "show up" for games, consider these athletes: Larry Bird, Magic Johnson, Michael Jordan, and Kobe Bryant. What do you know about their work ethic? If you ask people who know professional basketball, you will find that all four have the reputation for never being satisfied with their game and always

working to get better. In that light, it should be no surprise that all four are considered to be among the best to ever play the game. As a way to assess your own effort, I invite you to ask yourself two questions: "What do I need to do to have Kobe Bryant's work ethic? Am I acting this way?"

### *Commitment*

The final mental component of "getting it" is commitment. This component boils down to having the will to follow through with goal-setting, making the right decisions, proper preparation, and putting in the effort.

One way that I suggest athletes begin to work to improve commitment is through the use of commitment cards. These can be 3 x 5 cards upon which you complete the sentence, "I am going to commit to doing <activity>." The activity will almost always be something from the other four components of "getting it." Carry the card around with you and review it regularly.

In reviewing the mental skills used by an athlete who "gets it," you have probably noticed that, while you may get input from others, the ultimate responsibility for "getting it" is yours. You set your goals and prioritize them based on importance and logic. You make the choices about what you do on daily basis that move you forward towards meeting your goals. You "do the reps" and put in the extra time to improve your game, including resting when necessary. You put in the effort in both practices and competitions. Finally, you make the commitment to maintaining your work on all of the above. By doing so, you can prove that you "get it" to the most important person - you. If you can do that, others will no doubt notice as well.

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For more information about this topic or any other topic related to mental skills or sport psychology, contact your local sport psychologist.

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***Notice: The June issue (this issue) of Performance Enhancement News will be the last sent by US Mail. Beginning with the August issue, the newsletter will be distributed either through email or by download from our website. Also, starting with the August 2009 issue, Performance Enhancement News will be published bi-monthly.***

You can now hear Dr. Moncier on the radio on WUMP (730 AM or 103.9 FM) on Tuesday afternoons during "The Johnny 'Ballpark' Franks Show" which airs from 3:00 to 6:00 pm M-F. If you are not in the North Alabama area or do not have access to a radio at work, you can listen to the show by directing your computer's web browser to [www.730ump.com](http://www.730ump.com) and clicking on the "On Air Now" link at the upper right corner of the page.