

Workbook for
THINK AND ACT LIKE A CHAMPION

Brent S. Rushall, Ph.D.,R.Psy.

**San Diego State University
and
Sports Science Associates**

**The descriptions of what sporting champions do and think.
The content is proposed as a model to be emulated by developing athletes.**

2001

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Brent S. Rushall, Ph.D.,R.Psy.
Sports Science Associates
4225 Orchard Drive
Spring Valley
California
U.S.A.
91977
(619-469-1537)

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THINK AND ACT LIKE A CHAMPION
YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER ATHLETES

1. Make firm friends within the team/club who are serious about your sport.

2. Tolerate other athletes.

3. Join fellow athletes in social functions.

4. Attempt to be liked by, and friendly with, other athletes.

5. Train, when desirable, with another cooperative athlete.

6. Do not get upset when criticized by other athletes.

7. Offer constructive and positive advice to other athletes.

8. Accept advice from other athletes.

9. Help other athletes if asked to do so by other athletes or the coach.

10. Take an interest in sport team/club matters and projects.

Note: Elite athletes are upset by negative criticism from any source.

SUMMARY

Cooperate

Socialize

Help other athletes

Concentrate on your sport

Minimize negative reactions

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COACH

1. Aim to understand your sport by asking the coach why things are done in particular ways.
2. Trust the coach in that what is said is considered correct unless you have contrary evidence.
3. Ask the coach if you can discuss your sport with him/her and make decisions about your sport.
4. Always do as the coach says, within reason, even if you would prefer to do it another way (but do not accept things blindly).
5. Let the coach know if you disagree with or are troubled with any decision or directive.
6. When asked to try new things, apply yourself fully.
7. Request the coach to tell you privately when you have done something wrong.

SUMMARY
(assuming you have a good coach)

Communicate
Learn
Trust

REACTING TO THINGS THAT GO WRONG IN YOUR SPORT

1. Forget awkward social mistakes.
2. Calm-down quickly when you are upset by something involving your sport.
3. Do not brood over sport problems or mistakes.
4. Use mistakes and problems to guide you to do better things in the future.
5. I accept the blame for things that go wrong with me in my sport.

SUMMARY

**Do not let past problems or errors interfere with your future
Do not become emotionally upset because of problems,
errors, or difficulties.**

TRAINING

1. Prefer to have the training program planned well in advance so that you know what will occur.
2. Like training sessions that keep you busy all the time.
3. Slow-motion movies and/or video are considered to give you more understanding about your sport.
4. Always arrive early for training.
5. Never leave training early.
6. Try to do everything as well as possible at training.
7. Training effort is such that it causes you to occasionally feel grouchy and want to work alone.

SUMMARY

High productivity (quality and quantity)

Full participation

Crave feedback (information about yourself and your sport)

CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT YOUR SPORT

1. Feelings of ill-health, stomach upsets, and vague pains do not occur.
2. Organize your equipment well.
3. Justify that you have characteristics that are superior to other performers.
4. Have someone else plan trips, etc.
5. Be very enthusiastic about your sport.
6. Your sport is the most important activity that you do.
7. Primarily compete for yourself.
8. Discipline yourself so that you could train by yourself if adequate directions were furnished by the coach.

9. Consider that watching your weight is important.

10. Seldom miss training through illness.

11. Before arguing on sporting matters, wait until you are sure what will be said is correct.

12. Do not break team rules or regulations.

13. Be conscientious about the details of your sport.

SUMMARY

**The most important activity that you do
Participate maximally
Participate in the best manner possible
Strive to fulfill the expectations for national team members**

FOCUS ON SPORT

1. Make a point of not being absent-minded or forgetful of details about your sport.
2. Be as enthusiastic as you possibly can about your sport.
3. Do not miss training even if another interesting event were to occur.
4. Be truthful when you describe what is done in training.
5. Look for reasons, rather than excuses, for what is done in training and competition.
6. Unfamiliar arenas do not affect performance.
7. Enjoy training and competition.
8. Strive for better performances in training and competition.

9. Keep equipment well-organized and ready for use.

10. Make training challenging.

SUMMARY

Dedication

Self-denial of other things for the sport

Commitment of self to the sport

Be realistic and honest

PRE-COMPETITION FACTORS

1. Be prepared to put more intensity into competition than into training.
2. Plan your preparation and competition in detail.
3. Develop an alternative plan that tells you what to do when things do not go as you would like in both pre-competition and competition periods.
4. Warm-up by yourself.
5. Include in your warm-up things that are to be done in the competition.
6. If someone bothers you during your warm-up, do not let it affect your performance.
7. Do not worry about your opponents.
8. Be prepared to be nervous and tense before a performance.

9. If you are troubled before a contest, regain your composure.

10. Control your excitedness and tension by picturing what you will be doing in the competition.

11. Do not be distracted once your preparations have begun.

12. As often as possible, "see" and "feel" yourself performing in the upcoming competition.

13. Maintain your concentration on your upcoming performance throughout the warm-up.

14. Just before the competition starts, concentrate on how well you will do and feel in the initial stages of the contest.

15. Determine realistic goals for your performance.

16. Do not let unusual events or happenings upset or distract you.

17. Focus on your preparations and your competition content. Do not be distracted.

SUMMARY

Be an individual

Be prepared - major and coping strategies

Isolate yourself as the competition approaches

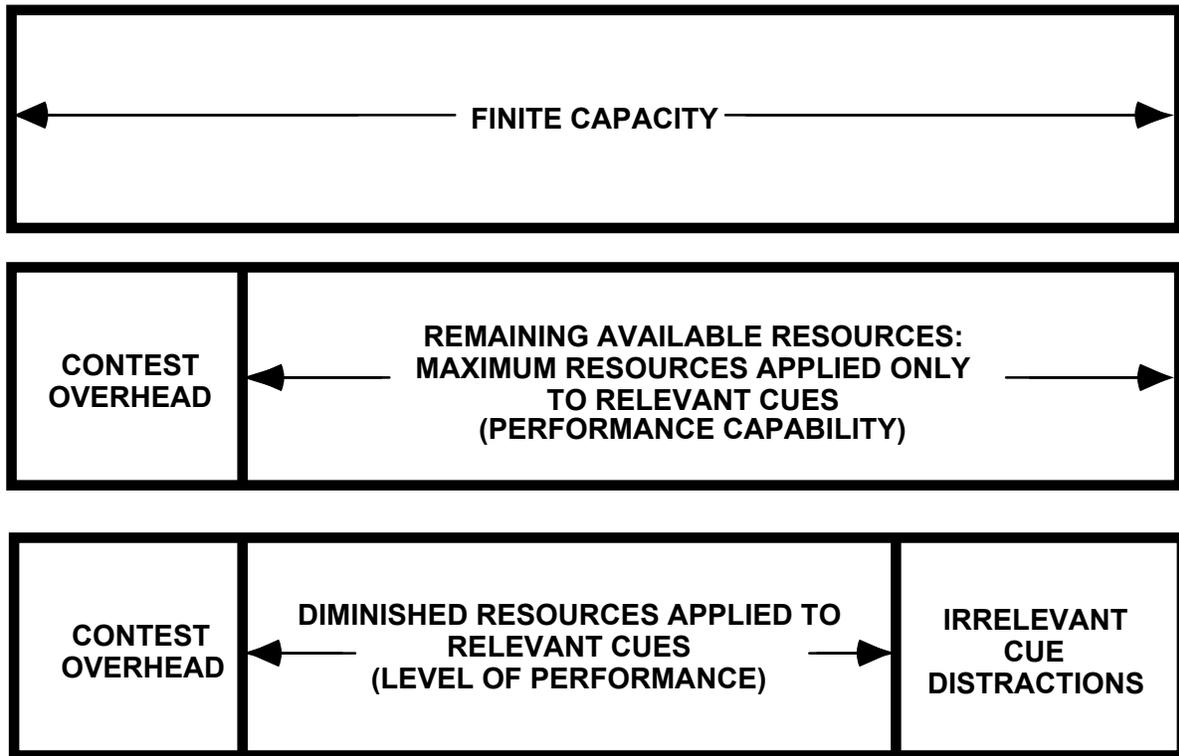
Increase intensity

Focus and concentrate

Mentally rehearse your competition

THE DIMINUTION OF SPORTING PERFORMANCE CAUSED BY IRRELEVANT DISTRACTIONS BEFORE AND DURING A COMPETITION

REASONING: Each athlete has a set of finite resources that can be applied to a performance (the "FINITE CAPACITY"). Each time attention is diverted to irrelevant cues over which the athlete has no control, performance will be degraded. The level of performance degradation is governed by the amount of distractions and cannot be recovered.



A schematic of the relationship between finite resources that exist at any time and the capacity reductions that occur because of competition demands and distractions.

STRATEGY PLANNING WORKSHEET

Page ..1....

Primary Behaviors	Coping Behaviors	Outcomes
<i>Get equipment and place in one location; find bathroom, put on sunglasses and earphones - isolate</i>	<i>Get away where will not be bothered</i>	<i>Isolate, do own thing</i>
<i>Take water bottle and strategy sheets</i>	<i>Drink often; say strategy aloud</i>	<i>Hydrate and review</i>
<i>Lie with legs raised in shade; read positive imagery sheet</i>	<i>Recite imagery sheet items</i>	<i>Relaxed and positive</i>
<i>Easy jog on flat while thinking positive; check surface conditions on parts of course</i>	<i>Increase intensity if does not work</i>	<i>Initial warm-up</i>
<i>Do 20 stretching exercises with positive-thinking</i>	<i>Continue with ballistic stretches</i>	<i>Loose and confident</i>
<i>Jog to hills and run up, down; on flats increase to race intensity</i>	<i>Continue as much as needed</i>	<i>Specific energy use</i>
<i>Performance enhancement imagery while walking</i>	<i>Full movement features</i>	<i>Positive and feel</i>
<i>Review strategy technical features</i>	<i>Perform them</i>	<i>Details</i>
<i>Repeat runs while doing technique check; plenty of recovery between each</i>	<i>Each item one at a time</i>	<i>Technical excellence</i>
<i>Decide which clothes, prepare shoes</i>	<i>Wear warm-up clothes</i>	<i>Check</i>
<i>Test shoes</i>	<i>Redo them</i>	<i>Comfortable</i>
<i>Positive imagery while walking</i>	<i>While running</i>	<i>Feel actions</i>
<i>Walk - stretch - run in team warm-up suit, performance enhancement imagery on as many segments as possible</i>	<i>Read strategy; increase intensity</i>	<i>Use up time; focused</i>
<i>Watch alarm; check start time</i>	<i>Check race in progress</i>	<i>Progress?</i>
<i>Delay routine: repeat runs while doing technique check; plenty of recovery, positive thinking</i>	<i>Add stretching</i>	<i>Technical excellence</i>
<i>Advance routine: to latter stages of contest build-up routine</i>	<i>Talk self through it</i>	<i>Intensify focus</i>
<i>Performance enhancement imagery looking at course sections and walking</i>	<i>While running</i>	<i>Intently focused</i>

A section of a completed warm-up and mind-set strategy that indicates outcomes, mental activities, and coping behaviors for a cross-country runner [from Rushall, B. S. (2001) *Mental skills training for sports* (3rd Ed.). Spring Valley, CA: Sports Science Associates].

STRATEGY PLANNING WORKSHEET

Page ..2....

Primary Behaviors	Coping Behaviors	Outcomes
<i>Stretch 10 sites and movements; Dress in warm-ups</i>	<i>Bounding and rolls</i>	<i>Loose and warm</i>
<i>Positive self-talk - drink</i>	<i>Positive imagery</i>	<i>Feel great</i>
<i>Go to field outside of oval and jog</i>	<i>Rain, 10 minutes stretching</i>	<i>Isolate</i>
<i>"Excuse me - later" for disruption</i>	<i>Turn and jog away</i>	<i>No inter-ruptions</i>
<i>Imagery of kicking and tackling</i>	<i>Roll while tackling</i>	<i>Main role</i>
<i>Run with half and pass ball; get lock to run defense</i>	<i>Kick ball to each other</i>	<i>Team work</i>
<i>Repeat acts until contest specific; achieve full focus; recover between each</i>	<i>Do some tackling run through plays</i>	<i>Perfect</i>
<i>Positive self-talk, image aggressive activity</i>	<i>Make heart go</i>	<i>Terrific</i>
<i>Jog; image attack and tough defense</i>	<i>Act out all images</i>	<i>Want to tackle hard</i>
<i>Pass with others</i>	<i>Handle well</i>	<i>Combine</i>
<i>Drink</i>	<i>Ice down</i>	<i>Sated</i>
<i>Emotional pump-up; hate and kill them - image crushing on defense</i>	<i>Fearless and crazy</i>	<i>Peak</i>
<i>Physical pump-up; bigger movements, faster sprints</i>	<i>Very active play; routine</i>	<i>Violent</i>
<i>Focus on start - speed and power; Continue until kick-off</i>	<i>Practice first steps</i>	<i>Only one play</i>
<i>Delay - return to jog and image of attack and devastating defense</i>	<i>Do it better than first times</i>	<i>Control restart</i>

A section of a completed build-up routine that indicates outcome and coping behaviors for a professional rugby league player [from Rushall, B. S. (2001) *Mental skills training for sports* (3rd Ed.). Spring Valley, CA: Sports Science Associates].

COMPETITION FACTORS

1. Initiate the contest properly.
2. Be prepared to take a lead or dominate early no matter what the cost.
3. Do not save yourself to make a good finishing effort.
4. When tired, concentrate on a prepared plan.
5. Always do your best although winning is not possible. Never perform anything less than your best.
6. Every competition should be seen as an opportunity to do better than you have ever done.
7. Think only of your performance in a competition.
8. Do not be upset by officiating.

9. Use interruptions as profitably as possible.

10. The more important the competition, the more enjoyable it should be.

11. Use information gained from one competition to modify and plan for the next.

SUMMARY

Maximum effort

Challenge yourself to improve

Increase concentration as the event progresses

Use planned strategies

Enjoy testing yourself

An Example of Detailed Planning from a Swimmer's Race Strategy [from Rushall, B. S., (1995). *Personal Best: A swimmer's handbook for racing excellence*. Spring Valley, CA: Sports Science Associates.]

Part of an Olympic Champion's strategy for a 400-meters individual medley swimming race.

STRATEGY PLANNING SHEET

Page 1

Primary Behaviors	Coping Behaviors	Outcomes
<i>At Start</i>		
<i>Stand behind block</i>	<i>Think positive</i>	<i>Focused, ready Stay loose</i>
<i>Stretch, keep warm</i>		
<i>Check suit</i>		
<i>"Feel great," "tough and strong"</i>	<i>"This will be the best"</i>	<i>Positive</i>
<i>Look at water and feel dive</i>	<i>Move with imagined dive</i>	<i>Ready</i>
GOALS: <i>Focused and ready</i>	<i>Positive imagery</i>	
<i>On Blocks</i>		
<i>Take stance on block</i>	<i>Flex legs and arms</i>	<i>Pumping- up</i>
<i>Concentrate on the water</i>	<i>Dive to a hole</i>	<i>Target</i>
<i>Take some deep breaths</i>	<i>Tense like a cat ready to spring</i>	<i>Sprung</i>
<i>"Blast", "boom"</i>		
<i>Straight and tight</i>	<i>Head down, streamline</i>	<i>Entry</i>
<i>6 to 8 kicks</i>	<i>Fast legs</i>	<i>Well out</i>
GOALS: <i>Great distance with dive</i>	<i>Quick kicks produce speed</i>	
<i>First 50 m Butterfly</i>		
<i>Strong with stroking speed</i>	<i>Distance per stroke</i>	<i>Length</i>
<i>Arms moving body through water</i>	<i>Fix arms and hands</i>	<i>No slip</i>
<i>"Feel terrific," "flow"</i>	<i>"Cover great distance"</i>	<i>Smooth</i>
<i>Arms under body, push back</i>	<i>Get over work</i>	<i>Direct</i>
<i>"Might", "force", "solid"</i>	<i>"Go for acceleration"</i>	<i>Power</i>
<i>Accelerate into turn</i>	<i>Aggressive turns</i>	<i>Speed-up</i>
<i>Wall is blazing hot</i>	<i>Tight ball</i>	<i>Fast turn</i>
GOALS: <i>Smooth power, flowing</i>	<i>Travel forward</i>	

THINGS ATHLETES LIKE ABOUT SPORT

These items suggest the experiences that a coach should provide for athletes to enhance the motivational aspects of the sporting environment.

1. The coach saying he/she likes the way the athlete is training and performing.
2. The coach commenting frequently on his/her technique.
3. Other athletes noticing this person's performances and talking to him/her about them.
4. Being able to compete and train with friends.
5. Training with cooperative athletes.
6. Parents being interested in, and approving of, his/her sporting efforts.
7. Being able to receive the outstanding athlete award in competitions.
8. Having friends from outside the sport being interested in his/her competitive efforts.

TRAINING

9. Having the program include a lot of variety.
10. Have each training session established as a challenge.
11. Having his/her skills improve continually in training.
12. Knowing his/her progress and improvement in all techniques.
13. Getting as much information as possible about the sport, e.g., how to train, the correct techniques, etc.

OUTCOMES

14. Being able to travel.
15. Having his/her name appear in newspapers and announced on TV and radio.

COMPETITION

16. Being able to compete well in every contest.
17. Having competition performances improve motivates this individual to train more and harder.
18. Being able to place frequently in competitions.
19. Being able to qualify for at least one final at every competition.
20. Every training and competition situation is seen as a challenge.
21. Improving in all aspects of the sport, not just a specialty.

USES FOR THE CHAMPION CHARACTERISTICS CHECKLIST

1. Athlete assessments to determine what qualities do and do not exist.
2. The measure the potential for improvement that exists in an athlete.
3. Location and description of what behaviors need to be changed in an athlete.
4. Measurement of improvement or regression in an athlete's behavior "package".
5. The establishment of behavioral goals.

UNDERSTANDING THE *CHAMPION CHARACTERISTICS CHECKLIST* (CCC)

The *Champion Characteristics Checklist (CCC)* evolved as a consequence of accumulated tests of world-champion or record-holding athletes with the behavior inventories included in the *Sport Psychology Consultation System (SPCS)*. There are many facets of sporting behaviors common to all sports. Consequently, a majority of the questions contained in the inventory sets are similar. On the other hand, each specific-sport set of inventories contains one inventory that covers behaviors and situations that are specific to the sport. The similarity means that it is possible to locate common questions between all inventories and then assess how athletes from different sports answer those common questions.

This writer made several attempts to compare world class athletes across a number of categories (e.g., sex, long-term versus short-term duration, types of sport) using the common items that exist across the sport-specific inventory batteries. None of the categories were differentiated from each other in any marked or meaningful way. It seemed there was a consistency among all the champions and record-holders irrespective of the sport or unique characteristics they possessed. It appeared a better strategy to assess the common features that pervaded the large majority of these outstanding athletes. The following section of this manual describes how that was done and how the resulting *CCC* was developed.

It is proposed that the *CCC* be used as a quick assessment of athlete characteristics. This writer uses it as a tool to get athletes interested in sport psychology. What is done is that athletes are told that the *CCC* measures features that are exhibited by the world's best athletes and then they are to complete the checklist and count the number of check marks they record. Their "score" is how much they are like a champion expressed as a percentage. This quantification can be done because there are exactly 100 items on the checklist. When deficiencies are noted, athletes usually want to know how to improve to develop those features. That awareness seems to promote an interest in sport psychology. The ensuing section illustrates some data collected with the *CCC*.

The *CCC* does not contain elaborate standardized instructions or an answer sheet. It is meant to be marked and kept by the athlete. It serves as a record for them having done some sport psychology testing. Because the content of the *CCC* is basic, athletes aged 10 years and over can understand what it means and can interpret the questions and responses accurately.

The *CCC* is perhaps the easiest of all the *SPCS* tests to administer. It is the type of experience that should be given to athletes when introducing them to the sport science area of psychology.

CHAMPION CHARACTERISTICS CHECKLIST (CCC)

Brent S. Rushall, Ph.D., R.Psy.

This checklist is part of the **SPORT PSYCHOLOGY CONSULTATION SYSTEM**.

Sports Science Associates

2000 (Revised)

This checklist contains characteristics and behaviors that have are consistent indicators of champion athletes. You are required to read each item and then decide if the item is something that is indicative of you. It is important that you answer honestly. If there is the slightest feeling that the item may not always be applicable to you then do not respond.

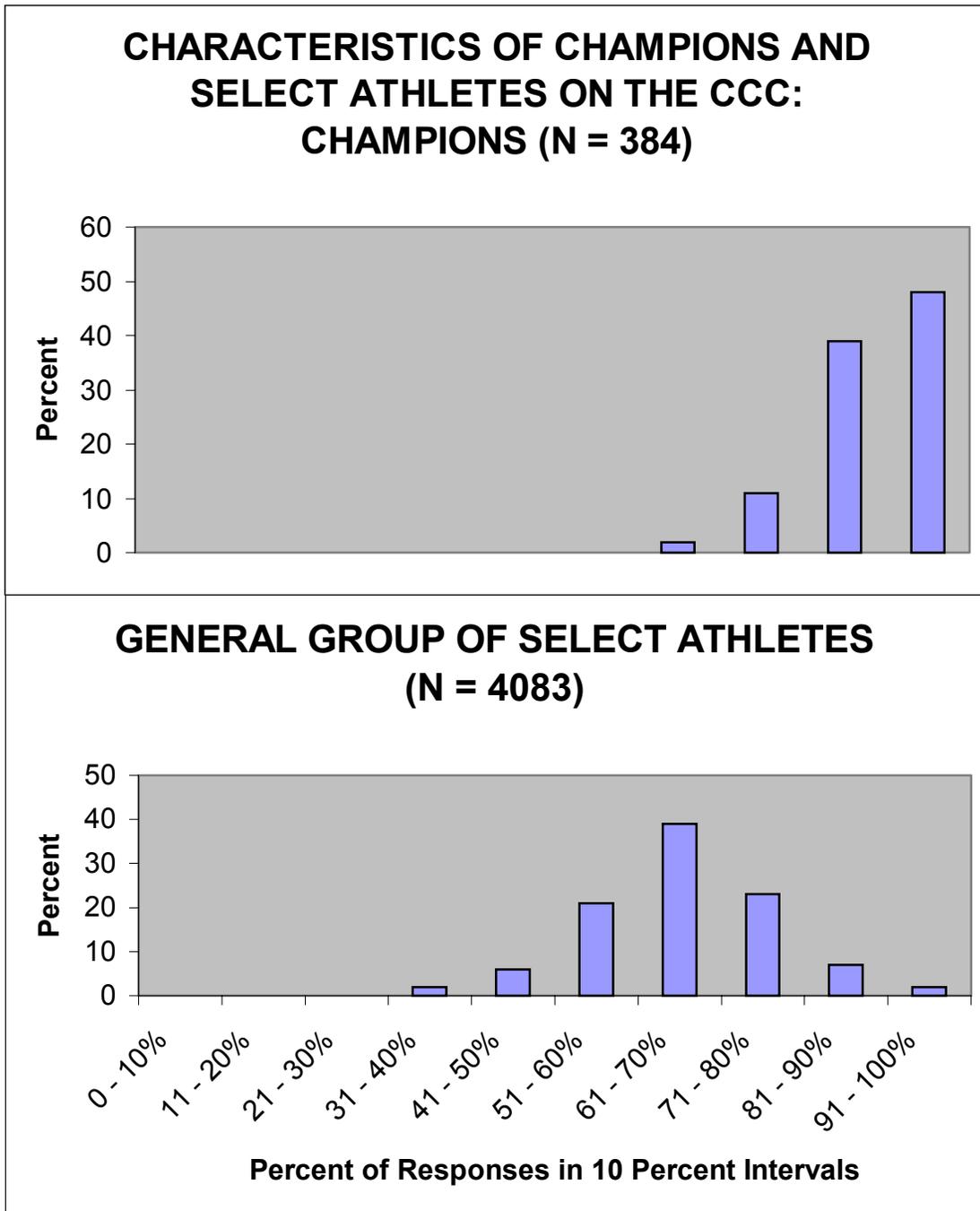
Answer the checklist by circling the number alongside the description that is true for you. After completion, count the number of responses you have made. That count is the percentage of thoughts and actions that you have that are required to think and act like a champion.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I make firm friends within the team who are serious about the sport. 2. I tolerate other athletes at all times. 3. I join fellow athletes in social functions. 4. I attempt to be liked by and friendly with other athletes. 5. I train with cooperative athletes. 6. I do not get upset when criticized by other athletes. 7. I offer constructive and positive advice to other athletes. 8. I accept advice from other athletes. 9. I help other athletes if asked to do so. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. I am interested in team matters and projects. 11. I ask the coach why things are done in particular ways in my sport. 12. Unless I have other evidence, I trust that what the coach says is correct. 13. The coach and I together make decisions about my sport. 14. I usually do things as the coach says. 15. I let the coach know if I disagree with any decision or directive. 16. When asked to try new things, I apply myself fully. 17. I have asked the coach to tell me privately when I have done something wrong. 18. I can forget awkward social mistakes. 19. I calm-down quickly after being upset by something involving my sport. 20. I do not brood over sporting problems or mistakes. 21. From my mistakes, I learn to do things better in the future. 22. I accept the blame for things that go wrong with me in my sport. 23. I prefer to know the training program well in advance of the session. 24. I like training sessions that keep me busy all the time. |
|---|---|

25. Slow-motion movies or videos help me to understand my sport better.
26. I always arrive early for training.
27. I never leave training early.
28. I try to do everything as well as possible at training.
29. I occasionally feel grouchy and want to work alone.
30. Feelings of ill-health, stomach upsets, and vague pains do not occur.
31. I organize my equipment well.
32. I have characteristics that are superior to other athletes.
33. I prefer to have someone plan trips and other forms of organization.
34. I am very enthusiastic about my sport.
35. My sport is the most important activity that I do.
36. I primarily compete for myself.
37. I could train by myself if the coach gave me adequate directions.
38. Watching my weight is important.
39. I seldom miss training through illness.
40. Before arguing on sporting matters, I wait until I am sure that what I will say is correct.
41. I do not break team rules.
42. I am conscientious about the details of my sport.
43. I make a point of not being absent-minded or forgetful of details concerning my sport.
44. I am as enthusiastic as possible about my sport.
45. I do not miss training even if some other interesting event comes-up.
46. I tell the truth when I describe what I did in training.
47. I look for reasons, rather than for excuses, to explain what happens at training and in competitions.
48. Unfamiliar arenas do not affect my performance.
49. I enjoy training and competing.
50. I strive for better performances in training and competitions.
51. I keep my equipment well-organized and ready for use.
52. I make training challenging for myself.
53. I put more intensity into competing than I do into training.
54. I plan my preparations and competitions in detail.
55. I develop plans that tell me what to do if things go wrong at competitions.
56. I warm-up by myself.
57. My warm-ups include things that will be done in the competition.
58. I do not let anyone bother me during warm-ups.
59. I do not worry about opponents.
60. I am nervous and tense before a competition.
61. If I am troubled before a contest, I can regain my composure.
62. I control my excitement by picturing what I will be doing in the contest.
63. I do not get distracted once my competition preparations begin.
64. I mentally rehearse my contest plan as often as possible.
65. I can maintain my concentration throughout the warm-up.

66. Just before the contest starts, I concentrate on how well I will start the competitive effort.
67. I set realistic goals for my contests.
68. Unusual events do not upset or distract me before a contest.
69. I do focus on the preparations for, and content of, the competition.
70. I start contests properly.
71. I am prepared to take a lead early no matter what the cost.
72. I do not save myself in order to make a good finishing effort.
73. When I am tired in a contest, I concentrate on my prepared plan.
74. I always do my best in competitions although winning may not be possible.
75. Every competition is seen as an opportunity for me to improve.
76. I think only about my performance in a contest.
77. Officiating does not upset me.
78. The more important the competition, the more enjoyable it is.
79. I use the information gained from a competition to modify and plan for the next contest.
80. I like the coach to tell me how well I am training and performing.
81. I like the coach to comment frequently on my techniques.
82. I like other athletes to notice and talk to me about my performances.
83. I like to compete and train with friends.
84. I like to train with cooperative athletes.
85. I like my parents to be interested in my sporting activities.
86. I like to be able to receive the outstanding athlete award in contests.
87. I like my friends from outside my sport to be interested in what I do.
88. I like training programs to include a lot of variety.
89. I like each training session to be a challenge.
90. I like my skills to continually improve in training.
91. I like to know my progress and improvement in my sport.
92. I want to get as much information as possible about my sport.
93. I like the travel that is associated with my sport.
94. I like my name to appear in newspapers and on radio and TV.
95. I can compete well in every contest.
96. When my competition performances improve, I train harder.
97. I like to place frequently in competitions.
98. I like to qualify for at least one final at every competition.
99. Every training item and competition is a challenge to me.
100. I want to improve in all aspects of my sport, not just my specialty.

TOTAL SCORE OUT OF 100 _____



Total score distributions on the *Champion Characteristics Checklist* for world-class athletes (N = 384) and a general sample of athletes (N = 4083) as of March, 2000.