

PLAYING UNDER PRESSURE

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As a player, understand that the mind controls the body. The more clutter and thoughts in the head, the slower and inconsistent the ability to act.

Having clarity is key. These three steps will help.

1. Before getting to the crease think on what things are required by the situation/ game. What you need to do and how.
2. Immediately before performing have one thought (watch the ball etc).
3. Then have no conscious thoughts as you perform the skill. Just do it!
 - Think of your best sporting performances. You probably just did it feeling natural and free without conscious thoughts of technique.
 - Encourage your cricketers to do the same.
 - Establish a routine. A mental one as outlined. Repeat it so it becomes habitual/ automatic. Do it in free practise, conditioned practise, do it under pressure regularly in nets, do it in games. Do it always!
 - Alongside this mental routine will probably be physical ones too.
 - Twirling the bat, adjusting a box, hitting the ground with the bat a number of times in the crease. For the bowler it could be licking the fingers, tossing the ball from hand to hand, a pull of the shirt.
 - When performed with a constant mental routine this pre performance process becomes identified with the player.
 - It is as much a high performance requirement as a good playing technique, physical fitness, tactical understanding and good lifestyle habits.
 - Watch a pro golfer, they have a consistent routine for every shot.
 - Why? Because even with their last highly pressured shots in trying to win they rely on this routine to deliver. It's this routine that allows them to execute the shot in the same way at the end of a tournament as they would at the start.
 - As a coach get the player to practise regularly stepping into a pressured environment. Challenging the ability to perform basic fundamental skills under the 'pump'. This then challenges routines, their consistency and repeatability. More important for the player is how this enables them to deliver their skill more effectively when it matters.