

**MENTAL
PERFORMANCE**

A-Z


FROM THE EDITORS OF *REFEREE* MAGAZINE

Officiating at an elite level is all about staying positive, present and focused on the process from game to game every season. Many college-level and professional athletes in all sports work with mental performance coaches. The sports of golf and baseball are described as 90 percent mental and 10 percent physical. It is safe to say officials, regardless of the level or sport, would benefit from similar coaching. Here is an A-Z mental performance fundamentals list to keep you officiating at your best. When facing adversity, this training will give you a strategy to go to. You don't rise to the occasion; you sink to the level of your training. By developing these mental performance skills, you will raise the level of your officiating.

A

ADVERSITY

How do you respond to adversity? Do you get fascinated or frustrated? As officials, adversity comes with the stripes. You face it nearly every game as well as in your daily lives. Learn to embrace and prepare for adversity. It is merely a bend in the road, not the end of the road. If you are struggling with overcoming an obstacle, change your strategy and attack it from a different angle.





BREATHE

Learning how to breathe properly is the single most important skill that you can implement into your games and regular life immediately. Before a game when your mind starts to race, your heart starts to beat faster and you have that familiar nervous energy, what do you do? Embrace the feeling and take five deep breaths. Inhale through your nose for four seconds, hold for two seconds and exhale through your mouth for six seconds.



CONFIDENCE

How many times have you heard that you need to referee or umpire with more confidence? Confidence comes with more game experience for sure, but a trick you can start using is to act confident. Confidence is not a feeling, it is an action! You can act confident by being big with your body language, projecting your voice and using snap, command and energy with your signals.



DISCIPLINE

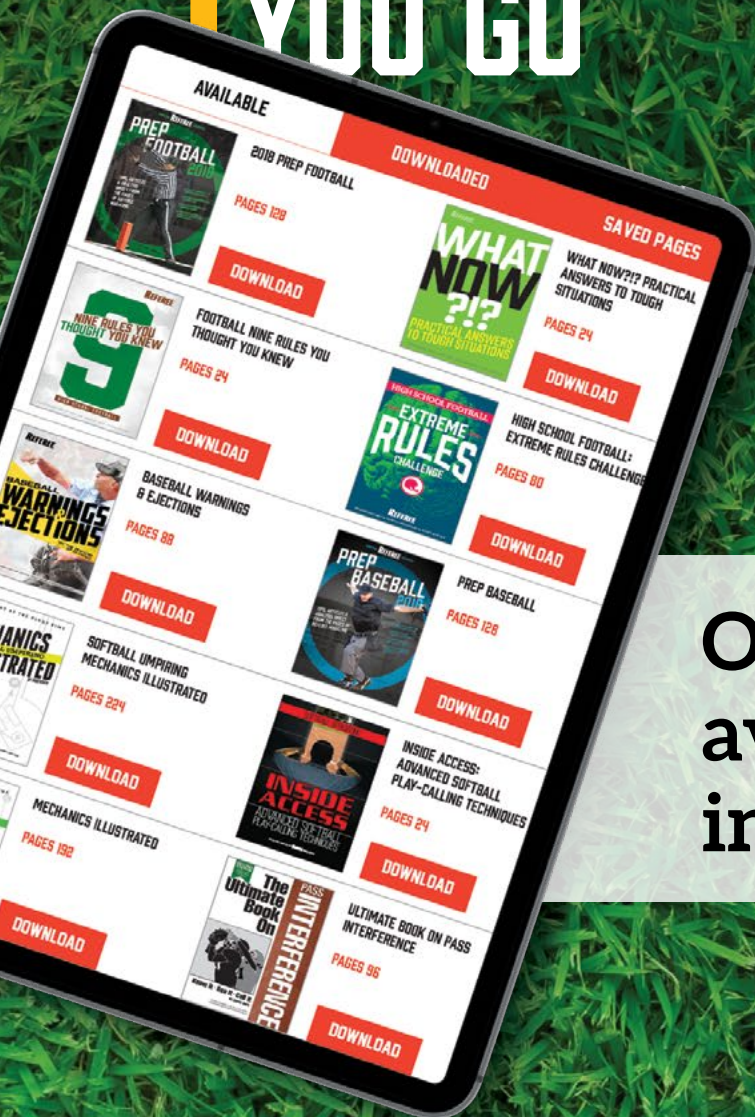
Discipline and self-control are skills that go hand-in-hand. Discipline is the ability to establish great patterns of behavior, so that you can make most decisions on autopilot. Having self-control means you can put off what you want in the moment for what means the most to you. Discipline and self-control will help you reach your big-picture goals.



ELITE MINDSET

Think of an elite mindset as the foundation to mental training fundamentals. Sports officials with an elite mindset seek feedback and are never satisfied with being told they did a good job. They are always searching for ways to improve. The alternative is when officials possess an average mindset and believe they have a limited capacity to grow their current skill set. Developing an elite mindset is totally trainable. Which mindset do you have?

TAKE THE WORLD'S LARGEST OFFICIATING LIBRARY WHEREVER YOU GO



Our huge library is now available digitally for instant download.



FOCUS

Focus is your ability to stay present and awareness is recognizing when you no longer have present-moment focus. Think of this skill as traffic signal lights: A green light means you are in control or focused. A yellow light means you are losing control. A red light means you have lost control. How many times have you made an incorrect call or had a bad interaction with a coach, and not been able to flush it or refocus?



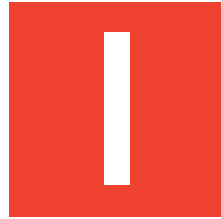
GRATITUDE

Have you ever heard the saying that it is impossible to be grateful and sad at the same time? Research indicates this is true. A good way to train yourself to be more grateful is to get a gratitude journal. Make this part of your a.m. and p.m. routines.



HABITS

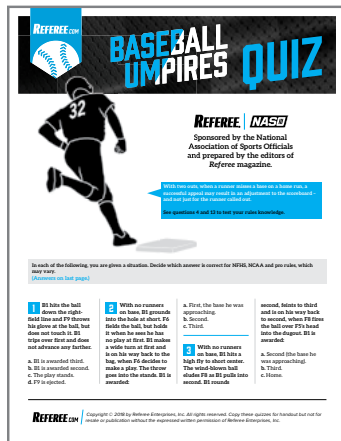
There are good habits and routines as well as bad ones. Develop good habits and routines before, during and after games. This will allow for you to perform consistently at your best. Developing healthy habits and routines will significantly reduce physical, mental and emotional fatigue because you won't have to waste energy worrying about what to do next.



INTENT

Identify what your mission, vision and core principles (MVP process) are and write them down. It is OK to say no to people and things that do not align with your MVP. Your daily interactions, routines and self-talk should all be in alignment with your MVP. ; the coach should know the rule. Pick your poison, but remember the rules regarding eligibility.

FREE RESOURCES FROM REFEREE.COM



Referee.com is the #1 destination for **FREE** downloadable guides, online quizzes, and digital content for officials at all levels.

WEEKLY REFEREE.COM REVIEW

Weekly collection of articles, quizzes, downloads, and more from Referee.com. The best in officiating delivered directly to you.





JOY

Why do you officiate? Many of you have a passion for the game and want to stay involved in a sport that means so much and brings joy. When dealing with difficult people or situations, remember why you officiate. Keeping your eye on your “why” will help keep you on track toward your goals.



KNOWLEDGE

It is a must that officials know the rules and mechanics of their respective sports. Between learning the mental performance skills, studying the rules, breaking down video and talking with mentors, there are a lot of ways to improve your knowledge. Challenge yourself to never stop learning. Read books on personal development and communication. If you don't like to read, check out audio books or podcasts while you are traveling to your games. Always be working on yourself as well as your craft. As Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson says, "The separation is in the preparation."



LEADERSHIP

Supervisors are always looking to hire great leaders. Leaders are officials who know how to develop trust and have a proven track record of success by sticking to their process. Leaders are mentally tough and masters of the mental game. If you don't already have a mentor, find one immediately at the level above you. It is just as important that you mentor other officials. Once you start teaching and training, it deepens your understanding.



MOTIVATION

Motivation keeps you working toward your goals. What is the hardest part of going on a run? Believe it or not, it is putting your shoes on! It's the start that stops most people. Action precedes motivation. In this example, motivation to run would come after you started running, not before. Commitment to your process will keep you coming back even when you are not 100 percent. If you have 80 percent to give, the trick is to give 100 percent of your 80 percent.



NUTRITION

Food and exercise are proven to be linked to mental performance. Think of yourself as a sports car. Would you put diesel fuel in a Ferrari? Develop good habits and routines with your eating and exercise. However, these are only two components of officiating performance. Do not fall into the trap and think you can stop there. You must work on the rest of the mental game to become an elite official.



ONE-WORD

Developing a one-word focus is a great tool for improvement. Instead of a resolution, pick one word to focus on during the next year or season for personal development. A good example of one word for 2020 is growth. Pick several areas of your life to focus on and get after it. Write your word down and put it in places you will see on a regular basis.



**ARE YOU
READY TO JOIN?**



PROCESS

Process over outcome-based goals — this is the secret to making dreams a reality. Many people write down goals and think they are done. Unfortunately, this will rarely accomplish much and will lead to disappointment. Goals should be challenging, specific and measurable. When setting goals, think of where you want to be in 3-5 years and write them down. Then you must reverse engineer into short-term goals and daily tasks. The journey is the reward, not the destination. In other words, enjoy the process.



QUALITY

Have you ever heard the expression, “Perfect practice makes perfect”? Always choose quality over quantity in everything you do. Make it a point to be where your feet are and be present in the moment. When you are in the locker room before the game, are you engaged with your partners and preparing for the game ahead or are you on your cellphone? A quality pregame meeting leads to a quality performance.



RECOGNIZE

Recognize, release and refocus. This is the mistake-recovery strategy that many professional athletes use when they are in yellow and red lights (covered in the “Focus” section). It is easy to apply to officiating. When you recognize you have lost control (missed a call), do a physical action, find a focal point and take a deep breath, say a verbal cue to yourself and take another deep breath. Doing this allows you to release the last play and get back to the present (next play) before things start to snowball.



SELF-TALK

What does that little voice in your head say? All officials have thought patterns whether they realize it or not. Make the decision to use positive self-talk instead of negative. Train yourself to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. You can do this with confidence conditioning statements before and during games.



TIME

Time is the great equalizer and one thing that is consistent for everyone. The most successful people are great managers of time. How do you manage your time? Managing your time can lead to increased productivity, instead of just being busy. Utilizing a time-management strategy that works for you can limit decision fatigue, allowing you to focus on your most important tasks and be on time to games and other important commitments.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION



OF SPORTS OFFICIALS

SAYES TO OFFICIATING

**THE NEW RESOURCE FOR
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION.**

FIND MORE OFFICIALS

- Pre-Built Presentations
- Turnkey Marketing & Social Media Kits
 - How-To Guides
 - Free Downloads

KEEP THE OFFICIALS YOU HAVE

- Mentoring Plans
 - Inspirational Presentations & Video
- Case Studies of What Works

GET ALL THESE **FREE** RESOURCES AND MORE @



UNIFORM

Make it a point to have good physical conditioning and to look professional in your uniform. Always pass the eye test with supervisors, partners and coaches as this will lead to credibility.



VISUALIZATION

Learning how to develop this mental skill set will set you apart and make a major difference in your performance. Develop a daily routine where you can recall past games and rehearse your upcoming game. Everything should happen twice – first in your mind and then in real life. Meditation is a great tool to add to your morning routine as well. It will improve your focus and provide many other positive health benefits. There are many types of meditation. Find one that works for you and commit to it. If you are not sure how to get started, download the Headspace or Calm apps for assistance.



W.I.N.

W.I.N. the day. If you always focus on “what’s important now,” you will win the day. Attack each daily decision with this mentality. If you regularly win the day, you will be locked in on the process and making progress toward what you want the most.



EXCELLENCE

Many officials are perfectionists, but there has been no perfect game officiated to date. Officiating is the one avocation where you are expected to start perfect and get better from there. When the game competition gets more challenging, striving for perfection can hold you back. Those who strive for perfection, officiate safe. Those who strive for excellence, officiate aggressive.



YOURSELF

In life and officiating, you only have control over yourself and the decisions you make. Instead of worrying about others, you should always be competing with and focused on yourself. Keep it simple and focus on the two things that you can control, which are your attitude and effort. Be positive and give 100 percent of what you have.



ZZZ'S

Do not underestimate the importance of a good night's rest. For optimal mental performance, you should make sleep as consistent as possible by going to bed near the same time every night as well as waking up around the same time every morning. Think of sleep as your cellphone charger. Would you want to leave the house in the morning with 10 percent battery life? Power naps and meditation are great ways to supplement your sleep needs.

By training the mental performance skill set, your overall officiating experience will improve tremendously. There are four stages of acceptance to mental performance training that everyone goes through:

- **Mental training is not for me.**
- **Mental training is OK for others (usually after showing examples of professional athletes using the refocus and release tools).**
- **OK, I will give mental training a try.**
- **I cannot believe I did it any other way!**

Which stage are you at?

BONUS SECTION

**40 REASONS
WHY WE
OFFICIATE**

1 CAMARADERIE

The fellowship and humor officials share with one another are incomparable.



2 BOOS

There's nothing like fans booing when you have the silent satisfaction of knowing that you got it right.

3 REVERENCE FOR THE RULES

Play by the rules regardless of what others are saying.

4 ESCAPE

Once an official steps onto the court, field, ice or pitch, everyday problems seem to fade away.

5 PASSION

The amount of passion officials have is off the charts. Passion to get plays right is what drives us.

6 ADDICTION

What official is not ready for his or her next game after the last? More games? We'll take them. It's an addiction that only officials understand.



7 FITNESS

Who doesn't like getting paid to exercise? There is little motivation needed to get you to work out through officiating.

8 NEVER THE SAME

Every game is unique and takes its own form. For the work of an official, no two days are the same.

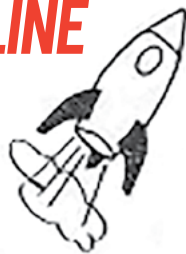
9 PERSONALITIES

Interactions with the players, coaches and other officials are great. Officiating allows you to channel your inner psychologist with all the personalities involved.



10 ADRENALINE

It's a rush to be in the moment and have to make the big decision.



11 COMMUNITY

Like Harley Davidson riders, there is no community like officials. When it comes down to it, during a game, officials' only true friends are fellow officials. Many of them become your closest friends — lifelong friends.



12 LOVE OF SPORTS

Most officials start out as sports fans. We truly enjoy the intricacies of the sports we work.



13 DISCOMFORT

You are out of your comfort zone like in no other job, hobby or activity.

14 MOVIN' ON UP

Everyone starts at the amateur levels and some ascend to the top of the profession. There's nothing wrong with staying at a particular level. But if you want to climb, opportunity is there.



15 OTHERS THINKING WE'RE CRAZY

Ever talk to someone and they look at you like you're crazy? Officials have the unique ability to enjoy doing a job the average person thinks is impossible. When everyone runs away, we thrive on doing what no one else could imagine putting up with.



16 IMPARTIALITY

It is important for officials to think with a clear mind. Officiating teaches independent thinking and the ability to see the big picture — a skill that translates outside of officiating.

17



MONEY TALKS

There is no better part-time job or hobby for people to make a little extra money.

18 IN THE GAME

Officials stay engaged and a part of the game they once played. The connection lasts well beyond their playing careers.



19 ALL FIVE OF THE SENSES

After a long work day, venting with the familiar sounds, smells and feels of the sport is a joy. Whether it's the swish of a net, the smack of a ball, the smell of the dirt or the squeak of sneakers, we all have something that perks us up.

20 FOCUS

The amount of mental energy and physical demands is unmatched. Laser-sharp focus is required for the entire game.

21 SORT OUT WHAT MATTERS

With a lot of action going on and a lot of noise, you have to sort out what exactly matters. There can be no fear or favor — just deciding on matters based on rule.

22 DEDICATION!

To truly be a good official, at any level, requires dedication.



TEAMWORK

No *one* official can carry a crew. The best officiating events require the dedication, togetherness and ability of all officials to be a team of one.

24 MAKE A DECISION

You have to make quick and accurate judgments. Your training, experience and powers of observation will be challenged constantly.



25 GIVE BACK

Most get something out of the sport prior to becoming an official. Many officials like to pay it forward to the sport for what it has given them.

26 PERFECT 100%

Officials enjoy the drive toward excellence. While knowing that perfection cannot be achieved, there is still great satisfaction in trying to achieve perfection.

27 GET OVER IT

In life, there are always setbacks. Officials have tremendous pressure on them to make correct decisions. Toughness is taught when we get a decision wrong and immediately drop it to get the next one right.

28 GUT CHECK



Officials learn how to have inner strength and self-confidence. To truly excel in officiating, one must deliver in both categories.

29 PEER PRAISE

Being congratulated on accomplishments by peers, whether it's a playoff game or a state tournament game, is rewarding.

30 CHALLENGE

Every game — no matter the venue, player abilities or teams — is a challenge. Nothing is mundane or an easy task.

31 LIFE SKILLS

Officiating teaches great life skills — helping you beyond officiating. For example, time is of the essence — no game can start when officials are late.



32 TRAVEL

Officials travel to many different places — interesting or historic venues and towns or places people likely would never visit. It's a great way to take in some amazing sites while you work a game.



33 HIGH STANDARD

You are expected to have high character, on and off the court or field. Many enjoy living up to the demands of being an official.

34 STRESS MANAGEMENT

No official would say the job is stress-free. Officiating — though stressful at times — also provides stress relief from our daily lives. Officials learn to balance stress through direct involvement in stressful situations.



35 DOOR OPENER

Officials are identified and associated with the sport(s) they work. People know who the good officials are. They recognize you outside of officiating.

36 VANTAGE POINT



It's the game within the game — not just watching the teams or the game.

37 GOOSEBUMPS

Officiating provides goosebumps in spades. The hair-raising moments are memories that make up who we are.

38 IT'S NOT COACHING



Many officials have coached or considered coaching. With officiating there is only a given time parents can complain. Coaches on the other hand have parents always complaining — with no filter.

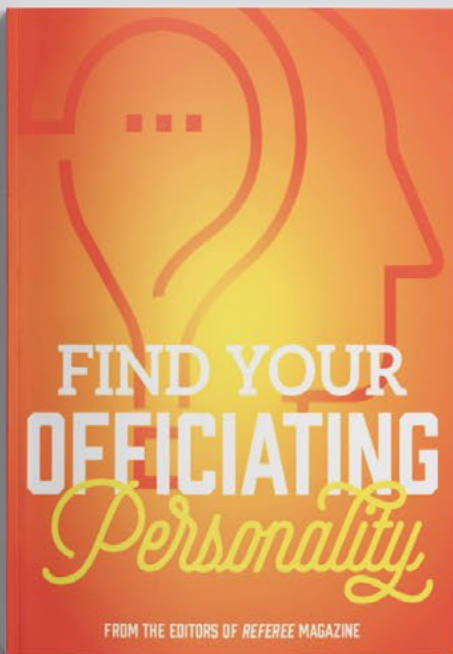
39 BEAM WITH PRIDE

It's great seeing the growth of fellow officials or your own growth. We all start out with different abilities and grow at different rates, but any improvement is special.

40 MEMORIES

The longer you work, the more memories you will build. Some will be the great games; others the talented players. Most importantly, you'll remember your great partners and mentors.

TOP FREE GUIDE DOWNLOADS



The decisions you make and how you make them can help you define your officiating personality. You'll be guided through some routine and some difficult situations and your choices will give you insight into yourself and the officials you work with.



The editors at *Referee Magazine* have pulled together 18 of the most useful tips to get you thinking right and prepared to succeed your first time out. This guide is a perfect primer for those with little to no experience.



Pregame preparation, site surveying, meeting with coaches and administrators and much more is covered in this great guide that will help you set yourself, and your crewmates, up for success every game.

GET THEM ALL TODAY FOR FREE



STRENGTHEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE

**TAKE A
FREE
OFFICIATING
QUIZ
TODAY!**