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IMPROVE YOUR... – VISUALISATION AND IMAGERY

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IMPROVE YOUR...

VISUALISATION AND IMAGERY

You may not have realized it, but you've probably already used imagery in your life – when you thinking about a game you will officiate, when you remembering the great performance you had the day before, the good communication with colleagues, the firm signal showing, and so on.

VISUALIZATION refers to only “**picturing or seeing**” something in your mind, where **IMAGERY** refers to using of **all senses** – sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste, and movement, as well as thoughts, emotions, and reactions. Images of some situations can be very vivid and can evoke many feelings and mood states (e.g. fear, anxiety, happiness, pride, confidence, etc.). The more you can control imagination, the more you can expect to control your performance.

Table 8. Imagery

IMAGERY SCENARIO	
Skills development, rehearsal and mastering Signals presentation Mechanics and positioning Emotional and behavioural control Game management Specific situations Problem solving	
IMAGERY PERSPECTIVE	
INTERNAL imagining yourself performing from your own eye perspective, like being inside your body and experiencing those images and sensations which you usually experience when performing in the actual situation.	EXTERNAL imagining yourself performing from outside perspective, like you see yourself on TV, or from camera view – looking at yourself from outside.
IMAGERY SPEED	
SLOW MOTION usually used for problem solving situations and learning new skills or movements in mechanics. E.g. If you are learning new signal presentation or new mechanics movement, start in slow motion (until you improve and learn it) and eventually move to real time imagining.	REAL TIME used for mastering and coordinating skills into complete performance. E.g. imagining the game situation of post play and required movements and positioning during that action.

It is important that your imagery is **vivid, clear and controllable**. When you are imagining specific situation scenarios you should detail it as much as you can.

Using imagery as a coping technique helps you anticipate potential problems (e.g. distractions, negative emotions, possible mistakes, etc.) and refocusing to solutions and next actions after their occurrence. You can use **solution mode scenarios** for some specific situation you usually have problems (e.g. difficult coach behaviour, losing concentration after first mistake). Imagery with the positive and solution mode scenario cannot guarantee a good result but it make it more likely. You will probably be most controllable over some situations if you rehearse them also through imagery.

Imagery can be effective as a supplement rather than a replacement for real situation practice, but it can also be used when you are not able to practice physically due to fatigue, injury, or lack of nominations.

Table 9. Imagery before, during and after the game

BEFORE THE GAME	DURING THE GAME	AFTER THE GAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to improve your skills or mechanics, ▪ to prepare for game characteristics (team characteristics, player style of play, coach behaviour, etc.) ▪ for specific situations that may occur ▪ on the game day to recreate a key signals ▪ to control your arousal state. <p>Using imagery for preparation can increase your odds of successful performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ during the time outs or other short breaks ▪ for next task or action required for the next situation. ▪ recall the situation that happened before ▪ situation that is likely to occur when the time starts <p>(e.g. player control, preparing for new team strategy, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ you create a replay of your performance and ▪ helps you recall the good aspects and memorize them ▪ helps you recall and visually change bad decisions and search areas of improvement <p>Effective way to analyse and review your performance.</p>

IMAGERY EXERCISES

When you start to use imagery technique make sure that you are not too tired or sleepy. Make yourself comfortable at some quiet and private place. Sit in a comfortable position and gently close your eyes, and focus on your breathing pattern. Find your breathing rhythm that is comfortable and try to control it. Repeat breathing with five to ten breaths and switch your focus to imagining a specific situation you want to rehearse.

EXERCISE 1: MANAGING A DIFFICULT SITUATION – PROBLEM SOLVING

- Find yourself a quiet and private place with no distractions.
- Start your imagery exercise with breathing rhythm that is most comfortable for you. After you manage to direct your attention to breathing prepare yourself for the next move – imagining scenario of a situation that usually gives you trouble.
- Go through the situation like you usually do and find what is that you doing wrong.
- Then think about the best possible solution for that situation and try to imagine doing it like that. See, hear and feel your proper response to this situation.
- Repeat it 2-3 times and always try to retain the image of what you want to do.

EXERCISE 2: ROLE MODEL WATCHING

- Search for a video record or clip with the performance of your favourite role models in officiating.
- Focus on their mechanics movements, body presentation and game control skills that you would like to add to your presentation. Watch them performing a particular move or reaction and repeat it several times.
- Then try to repeat that same movement imagining yourself doing it on the court. First, you can do it from external point of view watching yourself from the outside (camera view). Then, you can try it from internal point of view (eye perspective).

EXERCISE 3: IMAGINING DESIRED OUTCOME

- Find yourself a quiet and private place with no distractions.
- Start your imagery exercise with breathing rhythm that is most comfortable for you. Concentrate on controlling your breathing and repeat it several times until you become ready to start the imagery.
- Mentally rehearse a play or action first in slow-motion and then gradually faster to the real-time speed. Execute every movement and decision successfully, and fully anticipate what is going on during the action.
- Then practice the same action under various circumstances to ensure that you are adopt it appropriately.
- Focus on making sure that your movements are fluid and lead you to desired outcome.

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