



The International Sports Professionals Association

ISPA NEWSWIRE

OFFICIAL ISPA ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to The International Sports Professionals Association™

ISPA

Welcome, well here we are. Out of our passionate commitment to better serve those professionals who are credentialed in the field of sports, ISPA was created. ISPA represents the creation of an international association to serve sports and meets the needs of organizations to thrive in the "global village" that is today's world.

Visit our new web site, www.TheSportsProfessionals.com and examine all that ISPA has built for you, the sports professional. Looking through the web site will give you an in-depth look at all the benefits of being credentialed by the International Sports Professionals Association. Your time browsing there will be well spent. Let me just highlight the benefits we have established:

- ⇒ Member of the National Organization for Competency Assurance-NOCA
- ⇒ Continuing Education Program in conjunction with the Adler School of Professional Psychology
- ⇒ Publishing Division that affords members publishing opportunities
- ⇒ Newsletter with informative articles
- ⇒ Communication between association and membership is prioritized
- ⇒ A stronger voice in the world of sports
- ⇒ Consistent fee structure
- ⇒ Support for your personal professional growth
- ⇒ An informative, functioning web site
- ⇒ An international presence
- ⇒ A welcome ear to your feedback

We are glad you are as dedicated to quality as we are.

Young People Don't Know How to Play!

By Dr. John Mayer
President-ISPA

Socrates said, "Play is the work of the child." One of the dilemmas of today's young people is that they often don't know how to play. Yes, that's right, kids don't know how to play! And this condition is getting worse as kids are buried into technological devices as their definition of play. So, when they are among other kids, they behave awkward, fumble around and it becomes not fun. So, we witness a revolving door as they retreat back into their technological abyss.

Professionals who work in the field of sports know that today's youth do not get enough physical activity and physical interaction with other young people. The sad condition that our schools are eliminating PE and Health classes certainly doesn't help this problem.

A recent article in the New York Times Magazine by Peggy Orenstein titled, **Kindergarten Cram**. (NYT, May 3, 2009) reminded me of an article I wrote approximately four years ago on youth and play. That article of mine had a similar title to the one I am presenting here. In that article, as I am reporting here, kids just don't know how to play. Orenstein would attribute this to the fact that they simply don't get the chance to play like they used to. Her NYT article of May 3rd points out that Kindergarteners spend an average of 19 minutes per day in free play in comparison to 89 minutes learning literacy, 47 minutes in math, and 21 minutes in test preparation skills. Orenstein further points out that all this concern over cramming knowledge into the heads of young people in place of play is actually in vain because most experts and studies show that any advantage gained by this over-emphasis on learning is lost by middle school. She also points out that by not encouraging play valuable social and emotional skills are lost so much so that by age 15 academic achievement plummets and youth are more likely to exhibit emotional problems. She cites that authorities such as Daniel Pink have proposed that the viability of the United States in the global economy rests on the accentuation of qualities such as versatility, imagination, creativity, vision and playfulness.

But, I am probably preaching to the choir here. As fellow professionals serving sports, we all agree that kids need more activity and need to be engaged through sports participation in moving their bodies. So, let's take a look at how this impacts us as sports professionals and think about ways to change this negative equation.

What implication does this have for us?

The areas we most see the effects of this play deficit are:

Team participation- youth have a harder time being a team player

Motivation- it is harder than ever to motivate young people

Competition- young people do not know how to handle competition

Sportsmanship- young people lack the social skills of being sportsmanlike when participating

Coachability- so much of this results in young athletes that are harder and harder to coach

Quitting- for the young person, all this translates into a youth who will not stay with athletics or become easily distracted by other diversions in life and not stay with their sport

How This Can Change:

Leadership- Adults, and certainly all of us, need to demonstrate strong leadership. Let's get young people active and out into the playing fields, the courts and gyms and let's not accept NO for an answer. Physical activity should be a part of every family's lifestyle. But, we adults must make it such.

There is nothing wrong with insisting that young people get away from the electronics and be active with other family members. They may grunt and groan at first, but a strong leader can make the unpopular decision for the good of the family. This is true leadership.

Modeling- Not complicated to explain, we adults need to be more physically active and lead our youth into a new lifestyle. Show them the joy of moving around and playing.

Teaching- When you see negative behaviors during play, call it out to the young person and show them a better way immediately. Everyone, coaches, moms and dad's, professionals helping teams/schools, should call out poor social skills when you see it and use it as a learning moment. Encourage moms and dad's to stay and watch practices, not jut drop kids off and speed away. Then parents can give feedback to young people after the practice or game. But, don't be the negative, mean-spirited, "Vince Lombardi" coach or parent. That type of adult style just doesn't work with today's youth. In fact, it will turn them off to sports and physical activity

altogether. They will retreat back into the hibernation of electronics land.

Lobbying- Let's get more physical activity back into our schools.

Research- Let's build a strong case to prove the value of play and sports. Peggy Orenstein's article mentioned an organization called the Alliance for Childhood. Use ISPA, with our publishing division and CEU program to educate on the value of play and sports. Send us your research and ideas for publication, from newsletter articles to CEU courses to books.

So, I end by going back to Socrates. He would say that young people are not doing their jobs. (Playing) Now, let's do our job and get young people more active.

SERVICING PRO ATHLETES

By Kurt A. David, ISPA Member

100% of PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES ULTIMATELY EXPERIENCE JOB TERMINATION! This is my credo. As a former professional basketball player who now possesses an advanced degree in counseling and works as a Transition Consultant for Professional Athletes my interest in sports transition is both personal and professional. My focus as a Transition Consultant is to resolve the emotional and practical issues potentially associated with athletes as they exit their craft...back into normal, everyday lives. Over the years, I've learned a few things and would enjoy sharing some tidbits with you, as a fellow ISPA Certified Sports Professional. First of all, let me begin by stating my understanding of our craft as service professionals. I understand not everyone has interest or may be best suited to work with professional athletes. They are a special breed, which requires a special approach. Today's pro athlete is being pulled from all sides. Many people from many different aspects are looking for a piece of these athletes from agents to attorneys, from financial planners to investment brokers, from car dealers to realtors, from media personnel to the neighbor, many people are looking for a piece of their pie, if you will. Throw in the fact this is all occurring while the athlete is typically young, and trying to maintain a single focus...performing to their peak ability, and it's easy to see why they do not have the time (and often the energy) to devote to taking care of all of their needs. Thus, the reasons we often see an entourage surrounding our most famous athletes and entertainers. They must manage their home situations while traveling extensively, their finances during this peak earning window (most pro athletes face a 90% pay cut once done), and their personal time, all while attempting to constantly perform at their best. I've spoke

with many professional athletes who have brought up one resounding factor when discussing their need for any professional service....TRUST. Because of the amount of people constantly grabbing at and wanting a piece of their pie, many professional athletes become leery and their trust becomes limited. One way to build trust is a relationship over time. Unfortunately, not everyone has access to a large amount of time from a pro athlete, so we must find another, more efficient way. I've discovered there are three questions that I can answer in a very brief amount of time that will help build trust amongst pro athletes. They are no-nonsense questions that are consciously or sub-consciously asked by every pro athlete.

1.) How will your service save/make me money?

2.) How will your service save me time?

3.) How will your service be enjoyable for me?

If you are able to briefly and clearly answer these three questions, you will be prepared once you do get your foot in the door of a professional athlete. Not every service professional may desire to work with professional athletes, but hopefully this brief information benefits those that do, understanding there are many other aspects that make working with pro athletes unique...perhaps, in a future article. To find out more about me, my book, and my services go to:

<http://www.fromglorydays.com>

This could be your article! We are always looking to place member written articles in our newsletter. Please email Executive Director: Justin Mayer at Normandy1@aol.com with your submissions.

Look to the next page for another great member submitted article!

Keys to Mental Toughness

By John C. Panepinto, M.Ed, LPC,
CSC, ISPA Member

As competitive stakes rise and athletes push physical limits, there is a higher premium placed on the mental glue that holds it all together under pressure. This quality of “mental toughness” has two important aspects, which produce high performance: intelligence and resilience. The mentally tough athlete has the intelligence to identify the *how* and *why* of what they are trying to achieve, and the resilience to *adapt* and *evolve* to the challenge this task presents. Excellence requires toughness to overcome adversity, as well as the challenge of rising to the demands of higher levels of performance.

Twenty-five years of coaching and counseling led me to develop 11 Keys to help structure the process of becoming mentally tough. These Keys require an understanding of the principles and character traits that underlie the development of specific skills. Here are a few examples of “11 Keys to Mental Toughness”:

- **Take Total Responsibility for Yourself**

An athlete’s maturity level will dictate how to structure the development of these Keys, but this Key is foundational. It is beyond setting and keeping goals and learning to focus attention. Responsibility dictates the ownership of experience and the development of an internal locus of control. It means becoming responsible for victories, defeats and disassembling excuses and blame along the way.

- **Positive Self-talk**

Self-talk influences your internal environment. It is your inner voice that helps you problem solve, assess risk, regulate emotions, and make decisions. Self-talk can also stimulate positive mental states that serve execution. You get to choose how the coach in your head sounds. Mentally tough athletes choose a positive and productive voice.

- **Be In “Player Mode”**

In my experience as an athlete and as a coach, I have come to identify three distinct states that are related to the quality of performance. These states or “modes” are driven by three different processes and require athletes to develop the skill of self-awareness and an elementary knowledge of how their brain works. Athletes driven by fear are in “Survivor Mode”. Waves of emotions drive “Emotional Mode”, while execution and flow drive “Player Mode.” Learning how to attain or shift up to the optimal “Player Mode” of performance is a mental skill athletes must master.

- **Reflect On Your Goals**

Goals without active reflection on their meaning and adjustment for progress often do not work. Unless you *make* time for reflection, schedule demands and technological distractions limit your opportunities. Without this Key, “burnout” can occur because it is in the process of reflection that we come to know that for which we are grateful. With out gratitude, entitlement rears its head.

- **Believe In Yourself**

Belief in self is linked to the athlete’s path and purpose, and provides the fuel of passion. Without passion, you will not do the little things in tired moments. Belief in the self provides immunity to doubt, self-sabotage, and the need for approval. Belief in self also motivates the athlete to work from strengths, rather than being driven by fear and trying to be perfect.

- **Know What to Do With Your Emotions**

Failure is often due to a faulty plan or ineffectively dealing with adversity. The first is a mistake of intelligence, the second a lack of resilience.

Athletes react to situations regardless of how present they are. This emotional reflex does not require thought, therefore a thoughtful *response* to the situation matters most. If your reaction *is* always your response, then this implies inflexibility. Mentally tough competitors learn that some reactions come from an unconscious level. There are some reactions you “expect” and some you are unaware of because they exist on a level you may not have access to until you meet the moment.

If you are not conscious of your reactions, you will not be in control of your choices. Control your emotions or your emotions will control you.

- **No Surrender**

Develop a philosophy of “always finish what you start—with your best.” Quitting requires you to give up what you have control of: attitude, effort and focus. When you choose to quit you suffer the loss on a different level, because quitting is not a momentary process. The effect ripples into the future because you must let go of motivation and meaning before you can rationalize the option of quitting.

Mental toughness is a process and can always be improved. Developing a structure and philosophy of meeting the moment will help you to be at your best when it matters most.

Online CEU Program

Online CEU Courses Are Here! ISPA launches new program with the Adler School of Professional Psychology

Please be sure to check out the brand new Adler/ISPA online CEU courses. Each course is filled with practical content for helping you improve your professional standing.

The online program is being launched with four courses. These are:

Establishing and Maintaining a Sports Based Practice- A 3 Course Sequence

The Identity of a Sports Professional (Are you 'right' for this field-applies across fields)
Setting up your Practice (Very comprehensive)
Building Your Career (Proven techniques for Success)

Video Course

Ethics as a Sports Professional (Ethical considerations that span fields)

Although these courses are themed for the sports professional, individuals across many professions will find their content valuable. These courses are great supplements to graduate school curriculum as they discuss practical issues that many graduate programs simply don't have the time to teach.

Our courses are approved for APA CEU credit~ Many other courses are not.

Now you can obtain your CEU credits without attending costly seminars and without travel and attendance fees. Online courses save you time and money.

Visit our website [ISPA Education](http://www.adler.edu) or Visit www.adler.edu and follow the link to online education

Spread the Word!

Please email your professional colleagues about this new availability~ let your school(s) know about this.

Help ISPA Grow.