



FAQ's for Parents

1. What kind of athletes benefit from working with you?

All athletes who wish to take their game to another level. This includes not only the athlete that is experiencing slumps, blocks, and nervousness, but also the high performing athlete who recognizes they have greater potential and is looking for a competitive edge by training not only their skills, but also their mind. Essentially, any athlete who wants to be their very best can benefit from our sessions.

2. What is my child going to get out of working with you?

After a few sessions, parents of my current clients usually give me feedback that their child is calmer, more relaxed, and just happier in everything they do, whether it be on/off the playing field or court.

- I help students to build self esteem, self confidence, and awareness.
- I help students better understand what their goals are, and create a purpose - driven strategy in which they are responsible for pursuing these goals.
- I help students work through fear, anxiousness, uncertainty and other issues that may be holding them back from peak performance.
- I help students to understand what it means to concentrate and focus on what they can control, to compete fully, and ultimately to uncover their mental edge.
- I help students to better understand what is holding them back, identify their self-imposed limits, and then start working through them.
- I help students to remove the mystery of the mental game, and help them recognize that they actually have control on the court or field.
- I help students to uncover their unlimited personal potential.

3. How do you accomplish these objectives?

It starts with trust and self-empowerment. I encourage this process by helping students to make choices, take responsibility, and understand consequences of their actions. I help the students find their unique qualities, attributes, and values and help them to leverage these and mold them into their own competitive style.

I don't use a formula, but start with the individual person first. This allows me to better understand each person's uniqueness - what makes them tick. Additionally, this encourages the athlete to see beyond limits.

4. Will your work meet my expectations and my goals for my child?

Sometimes parents bring their child to me because they have expectations of them and want them to address certain issues in a specific sequence and manner. I work with students as individuals, treat them as a person, and empower them to take responsibility, become aware, and make choices which will help them both on and off the court/field. I don't mandate solutions, but more so provide tools, techniques and approaches to help them reach their unlimited personal potential and goals.

How they use these tools and implement these techniques is ultimately their choice. It is one thing to have the tools, but yet another to be committed and disciplined to use them and follow the process .

My experience is that the kids are motivated to improve and gain the mental edge, especially when they realize it will help their results. However, the process/journey may not happen as you or I expect; there will be inevitable obstacles, setbacks, and failures along the way. This is particularly where your child needs your support and belief in their individual process.

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5. What ages do you work with, what level must a student perform at, and which sports do you work with?

I work with students and teams from age 9 to athletes of all ages, levels, and sports.

6. How do your sessions work?

My private sessions are 50 minutes in length. I work out of my home office in Summit, NJ, which is equipped with sports equipment, TV and video. Additionally, I work virtually using ichtat, skype, and the telephone. Currently 50% of my practice is virtual, this works great and is very comfortable for the kids. It also allows for difficult schedules etc.

I incorporate exercises, demonstrations, and creative worksheets to hone and sharpen the mental game. Additionally, I often will incorporate on-court and on-field mental training depending on the specific needs of the student.

There may be times we incorporate a parent/athlete session. Additionally, I usually do a session with the parents after the first three or four sessions. This is important as it helps everyone stay on the same page.

I accept checks, cash, and pay-pal.

7. What are some specifics of your sessions?

The work can be done in phases or, more often than not, integrated together. A few components are:

Phase 1: All work starts with a comprehensive intake session. During this time the athlete has an opportunity to outline successes, setbacks, injury history, and their general experiences. It's amazing how an increased awareness to these things can reframe issues which have prevented the athlete from reaching another level.

Phase 2: The focus then changes to the athlete's "Big Why" - their intrinsic purpose for competing. One of the keys of this process involves helping the athlete identify goals and intrinsic purpose-driven strategies to reach them.

Phase 3: This is usually followed by work on concentration and focus, helping an athlete understand what they can control, when their focus is in the right place, and how to regain their focus once it's lost.

Phase 4: Other areas center on:

- Understanding how awareness impacts performance
- The 5 A's to change and improvement
- Pressure release strategies
- Present moment awareness strategies
- Incorporating breathing, visualization, and rituals into practice
- How to set up purpose-driven practices
- How to properly prepare for a match

Phase 5: Other areas of work include helping the athlete pro-actively use obstacles and setback towards future success, competing as well as they practice, taking responsibility for choices, learning how to trust themselves and their game, and bringing fun back into the game.

Phase 6: Lastly, helping an athlete let go of baggage and create distance from its negativity is crucial to helping them play freely. This baggage may be held at the conscious or just below the conscious level. It may stem from issues like injuries, or emotional on and off court experiences and traumas.

8. How many sessions are necessary and how often are they conducted?

This is difficult to answer without working with and understanding the issues particular to the athlete. Much like learning a slice backhand or going to the gym to increase fitness, the work is first and foremost a process which builds upon itself. The key is to maintain a priority on the meetings and consistency, much like you would expect if you wanted to learn a stroke, or improve physical fitness.

However, usually the intake, motivation, goals, concentration/focus work, awareness, present moment awareness techniques, pressure release techniques, process vs. outcome, visualization, and ritual work takes 8-12 sessions. It's best do these on a weekly basis. Often-times I then meet with a client once every 2 weeks, and then once every four, and then as needed for a tune-up and/or depending upon what is going on at that time. It's important to remember that different situations raise different stresses and trigger different outcomes.

The work can be more extensive in the case of repetitive sports performance blocks, slumps, or the yips, as well as an already high performing athlete being held back from reaching their unlimited personal potential.

9. Do you do group workshops and seminars?

Yes, I have spoken both nationally for USTA, USPTA, ITA and NJSIAA in all sports and internationally in India, Israel, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic. I also work with teams and clubs on a regular basis.

10. What are your underlying philosophies?

- a. The athlete is a person first and performer second. In other words there is implicit recognition that both on and off court stress, experiences, and injuries can limit an athlete and can block them from playing freely and reaching their unlimited personal potential.
- b. The athlete is not broken. We are not born mentally weak; rather the human being is born to survive. Certainly, what the athlete is experiencing may not be comfortable or bring happiness; this does not mean they are broken. The issues (blocks, choke, yips) are a symptom/clue to something that needs to be addressed. Like a knot on a tree, the athlete will grow taller, have more character, and become stronger as a result of the adversity they learn to overcome.
- c. An athlete's success is a process. Achieving goals takes time, patience, and will be wrought with obstacles and setbacks. These are opportunities, and should be looked at as learning points, not problems.
- d. An athlete needs a Big Why. For a child to excel they have to have their own personal reason for competing; the stronger this reason, the more apt they are to overcome obstacles, setbacks, and failure.
- e. The mystery of the mental game can be learned. The key is to help athletes understand certain clues. By recognizing and being aware of these clues, they can uncover the mystery of the mental game. (What do you mean by clues?)
- f. An athlete needs to focus on controllables, and adapting /adjusting to the competitive environment.

What are your qualifications?

Education: I have a Masters of Arts (MA) from Division 1 Seton Hall University in Psychological Studies with a concentration in Sport and Exercise Psychology. While studying for my masters, I was awarded the Distinguished Graduate Student of the year. Additionally, I have a Certification in Sport Psychology from Seton Hall University. I am also a certified professional life coach from IPEC, an International Coaching Federation Affiliate.

I seek out mentoring from Dr. Alan Goldberg, a well known author and mental training coach in the United States, and Dr. David Grand, author, and also internationally known expert in the field of performance and creativity.

Experience: I have spoken at conferences (USTA, USPTA, ITA, NJSIAA etc), universities (Seton Hall, Columbia), and high schools in all sports both nationally and internationally (USA, India, Israel, Switzerland). I work with players at all levels from professionals in tennis, baseball and top ranked collegiate and high school players. My most famous client is former NY Met Mackey Sasser.

On court/field: I have played, taught and coached on the competitive tennis level and have been awarded numerous Coach of the Year awards from both high school coaching and USPTA. Additionally, I have coached the NJ state girl's singles champion and Eastern Zonal 16 and under team in Waco, Texas. I continue to play competitive tennis and am an avid fan of any sport that incorporates competition.

11. What's your Big Why for doing this kind of work?

This is an easy question, I love kids, love sports, and love helping people uncover their hidden talents and reach beyond what they and others thought possible. There are no limits!



Rob Polishook, MA, CPC is the founder and director of Inside the Zone Sports Performance Group. As a Mental Training Coach he works with athletes and teams at the middle school, high school, national, college and professional levels. His work focuses on helping athletes and teams gain the mental edge, often the difference between winning and losing. Rob has spoken to athletes, coaches, parents both nationally at USTA, USPTA, ITA conferences and internationally conducted workshops and worked with top ranked juniors in India, Israel, Switzerland and the Czech Republic. He was awarded the 2008 USPTA - Eastern Division High School Coach of the Year award. Additionally he has published articles in national publications including USTA and USPTA publications. Rob can be contacted about his private or team consultation at 973-723-0314, rob@insidethezone.com, www.insidethezone.com.