

The Six Mental Characteristics of Champions

1. COACHABILITY:

- A. Direct eye contact with the coach.
- B. Nodding the head. Acknowledging the feedback.
- C. Exaggerating the coach's feedback.
 - 1. Behavioral
 - 2. Emotional
 - 3. Verbal
 - 4. Physical

2. WORK ETHIC:

- A. Trains above and beyond what is required by the program.
- B. Sprints to shag balls.
- C. Helps set up and take down net.
- D. Demonstrates physical exertion on drills that don't require high physical demand.
- E. Finds ways to get extra repetition (before and after practice, between drills, water breaks, running back to the line faster).
- F. Pushes oneself to be explosive even when drill is cardiovascularly demanding. (no coasting)
- G. Moves quickly from station to station.
- H. High physical output throughout the entire training session.
- I. Maximum jump on each jump attempt.
- J. Gets into ready position early.

3. CONCENTRATION:

- A. Eyes should be focused on the Next Task at Hand:
 - 1. Hitter: Play call, attack plan, type of blockers, server
 - 2. Setter: Rotational spot, attackers, blockers, play call
 - 3. Blocker: Rotational spot, hitters tendency, setters play call tendency
 - 4. Digger: Rotational spot, hitters tendency, blocking scheme, setters play call tendency, setter back row or front row
 - 5. Passer: Type of server, and tendency, position on court
 - 6. Server: coaches' signal, weaker passers, attack patterns
- B. Self Talk should reflect "Next Task Preparation" (3 second rule)

- C. Define proper eye focus for each task including narrow or broad focus.

4. LEADERSHIP:

- A. Demonstrates verbal communication skills that help prepare teammates for next task. (tactical, emotional, physical)
- B. Always demonstrates great work ethic. Lead by example
- C. Demonstrates greater concern for the central mass (team) than for self.
- D. Recognize that leadership is most needed in times of ADVERSITY.
 - a. lose a big lead
 - b. after unsuccessful repetition
 - c. after single game loss
 - d. after teammate makes an inappropriate comment
 - e. when down by large margin
 - f. teammate is sick or hurt
 - g. team versus large or voicetrous crowd
 - h. team versus better team
 - i. team versus inferior team
- E. The BEST leaders are those who lead by example:
Therefore: All players must understand THE CONSISTENCY OF THEIR ACTIONS will determine their credibility to be a great leader.
 - a. work ethic
 - b. supportive communication
 - c. coachability
 - d. competitiveness
 - e. systems understanding
 - f. concentration
 - g. confidence

The most important of these **COMPETITIVENESS**. Competitiveness is best demonstrated by the individual player who takes more aggressive physical actions, when adverse situations arise. These physical actions must come within the framework of the system and within their own present level.

5. CONFIDENCE:

- A. Displays positive body language & makes eye contact with teammates following an error.
- B. Looks composed when composure is needed.
- C. Never hesitates to take an opportunity to make a play.

6. COMPETITIVENESS:

- A. Demonstrates clear understanding of scoring system.
 - B. ALWAYS knows the score.
 - C. Celebrates more exaggerated when successful.
 - a. Setter – Look each hitter in the eye tell them to “crush this set”
 - b. Hitter – Turn and emphatically celebrate after each kill
 - c. Defense – Exaggerated effort on every dig
 - D. Demonstrates higher level of energy when competing against stronger opponent.
 - E. Wants to compete again, after unsuccessful attempt or contest.
 - F. Demonstrates insight in ways of becoming more successful.
 - G. Becomes more animated, energized, and verbal as game becomes closer or as the game draws closer to an end. (BIG MOMENTS)
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MENTAL TOUGHNESS Can only be demonstrated DURING ADVERSITY. Anyone can be a leader, appear competitive, and be coachable during non-stressful times.

How do you work when you are tired? How can or will you be coached when you are unsuccessful? How self confident and competitive are you when the other team is making a run?

Negative environments will always bring out the true **MENTAL TOUGHNESS** characteristics of an athlete.