

The Basics

Any Sports Psychologist will tell you that the **basics** of controlling your mind in sport are the **5 C's**:

Commitment | Composure | Concentration | Confidence | Consistency

I certainly found that looking at these areas had a big effect on the way I played...

Commitment

Not only is **commitment** a vital part of being successful in Table Tennis, but having high levels of **commitment** makes it a lot easier to get there as well.

One of the fundamental, core attributes of a successful player is that they have made a **decision**.

They have made the **decision** to put everything into achieving their **goal**.

Everything worth achieving in life is going to come with a **price**; the price of sacrificing free time, the price of hard work, the price of frustration when it all goes wrong.

But with a solid **commitment** to yourself that you are going to stay with it, the bad times just won't stand a chance.

Composure

Can there be a more **frustrating** game than **Table Tennis**?

How many times have you just completely **lost it** on court due to a bad shot or miss, and then never been able to get it back again?

Composure is vital if you are to play your best game - keeping in that **optimum mental state** with no distractions or stresses affecting you.

I certainly found that lots of the **exercises** that you will see later made keeping **composure** during a game that much easier.

In fact at one point I was appearing so **calm** that some of the players thought that I didn't care about winning!

Concentration

I certainly found that **concentration** was one of the hardest things to control, but also one that got a lot better with **practice**.

It is **focussing** on each point as it comes, and stopping the distractions from previous points, bad calls and future worries that are the fundamentals to good **concentration**.

Once you have high levels of **concentration**, you will find that your game flows a lot smoother.

The **blocks** that are subconsciously causing you to make mistakes won't affect you as much and playing will seem almost effortless.

Confidence

We all know that when we are winning, we are **confident**, and when we are losing, we're not so confident.

Why is that?

Confidence is merely a state of mind, so why shouldn't we be able to summon it at will, regardless of what is going on around us?

The answer to that question is the reason that **confidence** is my favourite of the 5 C's - because you CAN control it, and it's often a lot easier than people imagine.

Once you realise that **confidence** doesn't have to be a factor of what is happening outside you, you are set free to concentrate on trying to always be in a confident state.

When you are confident, certain things are happening in your brain and your body.

And the ability to change that can have a big difference in your Table Tennis.

Consistency

Looking at your Table Tennis game as a whole, there are few things that will make more of a difference to how successful you are than **consistency**.

Consistency means maintaining a high level of play over a long period of time.

Much of that comes with **preparation** (which we will be looking at a lot!), and much comes from **concentration** too.

I certainly found this to be an important factor to how good my results were if nothing else.

I would put my everything into the start of a game and play absolutely brilliantly, but then get **complacent**, lose that **consistency**, and thus lose the game.

When I realised that it was more important to keep a **consistently good level of play** going throughout the game, rather than trying flat out to win the first few points, I found it easier to win games.

After all, you can only win one point at a time!

Until next time, play well and keep fit.

Javad