

SPORT PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM, TEAM CANADA JUDO

OLYMPIC PREPARATION PROGRAM 1991-92

1. THE PROFESSIONAL

Dr. Frank Young is very well qualified as a sport psychologist of national and international standing, as the consultant for Team Canada Luge, as well as preparing various athletes in other sports, including Canadian champions and world medallists. Furthermore, Dr. Young has been involved in the National Coaching Certification extensively in the last 6 years instructing Sport Psychology in NCCP Level 3 Theory, and more recently, Level 3 Technical in Judo. Moreover, Dr. Young is a member of Judo Canada National Coaching Certification Committee, determining the content and policies of Judo Canada's coaching standards re sport psychology.

Combined with this academic and applied professional background, Dr. Young is also a 4th degree black belt in judo with over 25 years' experience competing, coaching, and refereeing in the sport. He has competitive experience nationally and internationally as a senior, and internationally representing Canada as a masters level competitor (bronze, U.S. National Championships, 1986).

With these dual qualifications in psychology and judo, he has the ability and credibility to work effectively with Team Canada Judo as their sport psychology consultant.

2. MENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAM 1991

There are 2 training camps planned for the entire National Team in 1991. During Training Camp 1 the psychologist should meet with the coaching staff to discuss the profile of each athlete in terms of mental strengths and problem areas (e.g., concentration lapses, competition anxiety, mental lapses, inconsistency, intimidation, etc.). Then the consultant would lead one or two team meetings to introduce concepts of goal setting, imagery, and arousal control. Next, each athlete would have an individual goal-setting review with the coach, then a conjoint meeting with coach, athlete, and consultant to compose an individualized mental training plan for that athlete. Then the athlete would meet with the psychologist for an audiotaped session (1 1/2 hr.) including arousal control, imagery for training sessions and skill development, and preliminary skills for precompetition and competition, according to the judoka's specific needs.

Next would be a team meeting in which every team member would present their own mental training plan, and request support and specific help from other team members in helping him/her implement this plan. This step is important in consolidating team spirit in what is essentially an individual sport. This particular aspect has been crucial in other team building situations. The consultant's visit would end with a debriefing feedback session with the coaches, exchanging impressions and concerns, and mapping future plans.

With the tapes from their individual session each team member can work on a daily basis with customized audiotape cassettes for the next month or two. Performance targets can be monitored and reviewed, and the mental training program can be modified or upgraded as the judoka progresses. Given the geographic distance between the judoka and the consultant, some of the arrangements for revision or upgrading of tapes may have to be arranged through teleconferencing and the consultant making these tapes with the individual in mind. Full scale revisions can be made at their next face-to-face meeting, in the second team training camp.

Training Camp 2 would have a parallel mental training format. The consultant would first discuss the progress of team members with the coaching staff, then present 2 sessions, on the topics of precompetition and competition strategies. Next the athlete would discuss his/her plan with the coach, then conjointly with the coach and consultant, then individual or small group sessions with the athletes (taped). Then the team would meet, with each judoka presenting modifications or refinements to his/her individualized program. The psychologist would again meet with the coaching staff for feedback and planning. Follow-up monitoring and revisions would likely occur again by teleconferencing and taping.

Training Camps 3 and 4, to be considered in the 1992 budget year, will offer refinements of the above formats based on athlete progression, readiness, and refinements before the games themselves.

3. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

For this process to be effective, the consultant should meet with team members on at least 2 occasions (and preferably more). The best time to begin is in the off-season or pre-season, with further refinements as the competitive season begins and progresses. Given the nature of Canada's geography, and the fact that team members may be training in several locations,

logistics may be difficult. Dropping in at training camps or centres in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver may be feasible, with the most likely scenario being the training camps mentioned above. As mentioned before, given the logistics involved, some budgetary provision will need to be made for teleconferencing between the consultant and the coaches and athletes involved.

Another factor to consider is bilingualism. Dr. Young speaks 2 languages, English and Judo. It is possible for him to work en francais, but he will likely need some help there. He speaks a little French, and can likely translate key concepts to make his work effective with both anglophone and francophone athletes.

Ideally, Team Canada Judo should have a 4-year plan and budget for mental preparation for 1996 Olympics. Dr. Young is willing to assist in the development of such a plan. Currently, however, he is ready to assist our athletes in the short term over the coming year for our Olympic bid for 1992.