

# GAME ON!

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*"The reality is that changes are coming... They must come. You must share in bringing them."*

-John Hersey,  
Author

*Master your mental game & take control of your performance*

## CHANGES Transitions throughout the seasons

As the season changes, the transition is marked by symbols of the upcoming Fall; the air gets a little colder, the days get shorter, and you spend your last afternoon at the beach. As an athlete, you will face many transitional times in your sport. In some cases, you are ready for the transition, but other times you just want things to stay as there are.

In sport, transitions come

in many different forms. Sometimes it is unexpected and out of your control, like being injured or cut from the team. Other times, the transition comes in the form of your focus and motivation when you are moving to the next level in your sport or trying to seek out balance in other areas of your life. Transitions are a necessary and constant part of life. Your ability to



work through these transitions will define your journey as an athlete.

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## TIPS FOR IMPROVING A SPECIFIC SKILL

Looking to improve a specific skill in your sport? Read the tips below:

**Motivation** – Ask yourself, how would improving this skill benefit my overall performance? Knowing the answer to this can help when you get frustrated, lose motivation, or hit a plateau. On a scale of 1 – 10, how do you rate on this skill? What steps do you need to take in order to move towards a 10? Set some short-term goals and chart your progress each week. Seeing your

improvement can help with your confidence and motivation.

**Use Video** – The use of video is a powerful form of feedback. Video can be used to see yourself performing the skill and then evaluate any changes you need to make. Video can also be used to see how an expert executes the skill so you know what you're trying to emulate.

**Imagery** – Visualizing the performance of a motor skill and actually

performing the skill share some of the same neural pathways in their preparation. Imagery is a great way to practice learning and refining a skill.

**Take a Break** – Sometimes working diligently on one skill can lead to information overload. Prevent frustration and burn out by periodically switching to a different task. When you revisit the skill you will come back with renewed energy and attitude!

**Post Season****Rituals****Indulge yourself**

Eat something or drink something that you would never dream of while you are in season. Go out for pizza and beer and toast to your accomplishments. Order the biggest dessert on the menu and talk about the highlights of your season.

**Have a party**

Start your own post season party to celebrate and hang out with your teammates or with family and friends that you don't get see as much while you're in season.

**Have a "me" day**

This one comes from one of my clients! Pick a day where you get to do absolutely whatever you want. If you want to go bowling – go bowling. If you want to sleep until noon – sleep until noon. If you want to go for a hike, go to the beach, play guitar, go to a movie, go out to a club – whatever you want, do it! It's your day so take the opportunity to celebrate your post season by doing whatever it is you want to do!

**CHANGES, CON'T****From one season to the next**

Without a transition, your seasons can blur together and result in: 1. never solidifying what you've learned where you want to go and 2. feeling like you never get a break. Two important elements of transitioning between seasons include taking time to evaluate, and coming up with a post season ritual to signify the end of your season. Evaluating includes looking at:

- What are some of your accomplishments from this season?
- What were some of your biggest challenges?
- What was your greatest area of improvement?
- What do you want to accomplish next year?

Create your own post-season ritual that symbolizes the end of one season and the beginning of a new one. A ritual can be as simple as cleaning your gear and hanging it up for the season. Check

out the Post Season Ritual column for more ideas.

**Transitions throughout your career**

Throughout your sport experience you'll be caught between two worlds: the one that you have always known and the one on the horizon. These transitions call out for you to recognize them and then make a choice. It's like the saying goes – if you keep doing what you've always done, you'll keep getting what you've always got! When you are in this type of transition, you need to recognize that something has to change and that something usually means *you*. It's time to either redefine

yourself or redefine your relationship with your sport.

Look at the evolution of Madonna – many people attribute the longevity of her career to the fact that she constantly redefines herself. If you define yourself through old belief systems when you face a transition you will stagnate. Imagine if Madonna walked around in the same outfits she wore in her early years. Yikes! Transitions ask us to let go of old definitions and choose new ones. Transitions are often unpredictable and uncertain. First you have to be OK with moving into a place of uncertainty. Then you have to choose to let go of the old and embrace the new.

So as we leave our long warm nights and pack up our shorts, it's time to relish the sweet smell after the first big rainfall. It's OK to feel loss at what you leave behind – as long as you make the choice to look forward to what is yet to come.

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