

GOLDMIND Excellence

Task Focus

Do you perform better in training than in competition?

Case study.

This athlete, although she had been on two Olympic speed skating teams, had never performed as well in an important competition as she did in training or in time trials.

On her Reflections form she outlined the focus that had allowed for her best performances

in competition. However, this focus did not result in her performing to the level she had achieved in training. To pursue her potential in competition, she gained by looking closely at her focus method for best performances in training.

Best Focus

- "Just relax, stay loose"
- "Just be me and skate the best I can"
- "Focus on me"
- "Just do what you have prepared to do"
- "Do my best, that's all"
- "Push your max"
- "See what you can do when pushing your max"
- "Focus only on race"
- "Stay low"
- "Race my race"

LESSONS FROM TRAINING

In training, which is where she excelled, she just thought about staying low and skating fast. In competitions, this focus often gave way to watching the best skaters and worrying about them, trying to impress the coach, and—sometimes—to thinking in great detail about technique.

After developing and implementing her competition plan, she quickly discovered that her best focus for competition was similar to the one that worked best in training. For example, by reminding herself to "just relax, stay loose, do my best, and that's it," she could carry a perspective that felt good and worked well. Helpful pre-race reminders included one or more of the following: "Just be me and skate the best I can," "Focus on me," "Just do what you have prepared to do," "Do my best and that's all." In her initial pre-

race plan she included a commitment to push to her maximum—"Push your max," "See what you can do when pushing your max," "Go as fast as you can"—and a reminder to focus on her own race and not on other racers. After a number of races she discovered that she did not need a reminder to "push her max." In fact, it tended to interfere with her relaxed flow early in the race, so she deleted it from her pre-race plan.

Soon after implementing her new competition plan, she began, for the first time ever, to perform as well in races as she had in training. She actually skated some personal bests in important competitions. After every race, she completed a Race Evaluation form and continued to refine her plans based upon these evaluations.



Whenever she felt the need to refine something on her plan, she wrote it on her planning form. The night before her race, she listened to quiet music, relaxed, and read over her revised plan.

She found that her best races occurred when her only goal going into the race was to skate well and "stay low." She also felt best within the race when she focused only on "staying low" and "racing her race."

The final thought that she ended up using as she approached the starting line for her best races was, "I have the motion—I have the motion." She generated this phrase herself. It reflected confidence in her mental plan and her physical ability and reminded her of the focus she needed to carry into the race.

FOCUS
Do it!
Do it right!
Do it right now!

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FOCUSED:
Right HERE,
Right NOW