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**Latest
News**

**Upcoming
Events**

Canterbury Open Snooker
Championships August 11 &
19 at the Papanui Club

Capital City Open Billiards
August 11 & 12 at the Porirua
Club

ABSA Open Snooker August
18 & 19 at the ABSA rooms

Heaphy Hawkes Bay
Snooker Open September 1
& 2



Gazza's Say... The importance of a good attitude.

After visiting the UK for the World Snooker Coaching Course, I have had time to reflect on the mountain of information given to me.

The thing that stands out from all the rest of the info, is the "head stuff". You know the Attitude, the Preparation, the Fighting Spirit, the stuff that controls not only how we play, but how we perceive ourselves and our performances. How we deal with the inevitable loss, how we deal with the victories, how we wake up tomorrow and want to do it all again.

For me the difference between average players and top players, or club players and average players is usually 2 things.

- 1) The better players do the basic things better.
- 2) The better players perceive that they are better and thus have a better thought process going on before, during and after a match. This is what defines us.

As Henry Ford said **"If you think you can, or if you think you can't, you are usually right"**

If you want to improve your game, start with your perception of yourself as a player. Take a step back from yourself and look at yourself as if you were a third person. Ask yourself;

Am I mentally prepared for this match?

Am I in the right frame of mind to do battle? c

Can I control my thoughts and concentrate on my positives whilst eliminating my negatives? c

Can I control my mind when things get tight in the last rack or frame?

Will I act graciously when I prevail or when I come second?

Will I evaluate my performance critically and positively once the match is over, taking tips and information from each match to make me stronger for the next match?

When I spoke with the likes of Terry Griffiths, Steve Davis and Chris Henry, it became clear that all professional top players did all of the above and more. The likes of Ronnie O'Sullivan has a top sports psychologist to counsel him regularly. It was so obvious to watch him in this year's World Snooker Championship that he was totally in control of his inner self. When a phone went off or an opponent had a slice of luck, he didn't bat an eyelid, he stayed focussed and kept on winning. Is this what you do? Or are you the type that hears every noise, every distraction, who bemoans every little thing that goes against you? If you are, the key to better performance may not be on the practise table but in your own head.

This Month's Practice Routine...

In keeping with the theme of mental preparation, this month I would like you all to try the following for a few weeks and let me know if you find any difference to your a) Attitude, b) Game.

Before you play each time (whether practise or a match), spend 5 minutes alone before you go to the table thinking about how well you are playing, how well you are striking the cue ball. Think about your best pots over the last week or two, how it felt when you potted that great ball, what the sound of the ball striking the back of the pocket sounded like, what it felt like when the cue hit the exact spot on the cue ball you were aiming for. If you have been struggling recently, cast your memory further back to when you were playing well and remember those shots.

Get yourself a note book and write down a brief description of how you played after each match or practise session. Note down how you felt during the game eg happy, energised, fatigued, grumpy etc. Write down 2 things you did really well for the session. Write down the one thing you would like to improve on from that session, eg safety was not the right strength, long pots were off etc.

Review your notebook each week and try and incorporate some of the things that need improvement into your following weeks practise sessions. It will be amazing to you how quickly you can turn a weakness into a strength once you have identified it.

Let me know what you think of this after 2 or 3 weeks, I am interested in your feedback.

Many thanks.