



Group Exercise - *Mental Diversity*

Lessons to be gained:

#1 Importance of mental diversity - everyone brings something unique and valuable to the team

#2 A chain is only as strong as its weakest link - every team member is important

Tools Needed = 2 index cards and pens/pencils for each athlete

Prerequisites = each athlete has completed the TAP assessment and knows his/her TAP AthleteType

When/Where = can be done in conjunction with the Introductory AthleteTypes Team Meeting presentation or stand alone session.

Step 1 - Preparation

choose one of the three below

- Be sure each athlete has a copy of his/her TAP Athlete Type report printed in hand for Step 2
- Have a poster of each type available for viewing on a wall during Step 2
- Show each type's summary on a projector screen for Step 2 -- go through types one by one (go to athletetypes.com/materials for presentations and look for the *Introductory AthleteTypes Team Presentation*)

Step 2 - Action (for Activities #1 & #2)

- Each athlete writes on one index card
 - Side 1 -- **one positive characteristic or strength** from their respective Athlete Type report that the athlete most relates to himself/herself; note on the card if strength or weakness
 - Side 2 -- **one negative characteristic or weakness** from their respective Athlete Type report that the athlete most relates to himself/herself; note on the card if strength or weakness
- If they are doing this exercise in conjunction with the Team Presentation, be sure to stop at each type's summary screen and have each of the athletes from that type write down the strengths and weaknesses on their index cards.

Step 3 - Activities

Activity #1

1. Assemble team into 8 groups - one group for each of the 8 Athlete Types; if there are no athletes for one or more of the types, no worries.
2. Select one of your larger AthleteType groups (e.g., Eagles) to get up in front of the group with their cards in hand
3. Announce that the others should imagine that this group is a single team about to compete
4. Have them place their index card on their forehead with the strength side out
 - Coach reads aloud some/all strengths (depending on size of group) and points out that the strengths are somewhat similar
5. Now have them place their index card on their forehead with the weakness side out
6. Coach reads aloud some/all the weaknesses (depending on size of group) and points out that the weaknesses are somewhat similar
7. OPTIONAL: Repeat with another group(s)

The LESSON TO BE LEARNED here: If we all have similar mental strengths and weaknesses, we can more easily be defeated due to our team's narrow strengths and weaknesses. Coach should explain this clearly.

Activity #2

1. Assemble team into groups around 10 in each - purposely mixing up the TAP Athlete Types
2. Have one group get up in front of the larger team with their cards in hand
3. Announce that the others should imagine that this group is a single team about to compete
4. Have each athlete in the subgroup place their index card on their forehead with the strength side out
5. The coach reads many/all of the strengths and stresses that this sounds like a strong, balanced team
6. Have one athlete flip his/her card over to the weakness side and say it outloud while the others keep their strength side showing
 - The coach then leads the group in analyzing the strengths of the others to identify one or more strengths from the others that will help compensate and overcome the one athlete's shown weakness
 - Repeat multiple times with different athletes showing their weaknesses one at a time

The LESSON to stress here: Everyone has weaknesses. But it is the strengths of other teammates that compensate for each individual's weaknesses.

Activity #3 -- (Most Effective When Performed Pre-Season)

1. Have each athlete take an index card. Based upon their understanding of their Athlete Type, their individual characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, they will write down what they need from the team and what they can offer the team. Usually, they will need help from the team to help with one or two key weaknesses. Example, "I need someone to talk positively to me after I make a mistake to help me move on". Then on the flip side they should write what they can offer the team based upon their characteristics and strengths.
 - 1.1. Side 1 = What Athlete Needs from Team
 - 1.2. Side 2 = What the Athlete Can Give to the Team
2. Have each athlete step to the front of the room and read what they need from the team.
3. Then, other teammates and coaches can respond to each athlete with how they can help the need. The moderating coach should encourage discussion, whenever applicable. If there is an extra person available, he/she can write down the names of each athlete and who responds to help.
4. Collect the Need / Give cards.
5. Record the individual athletes' needs in a document in table format and then publish to the team. Have individuals "sign up" to help each athlete with their need. Again, the volunteer's characteristics and strengths should match the other athlete's need. You can also fill in the names of those that responded during the exercise if you recorded them at the time.
6. Once all the athletes have a volunteer to help, publish the document in the locker room or some other prominent place where athletes can be reminded of their responsibility.

Sample Table

Athlete Name	Needs	Who Will Help?
Athlete #1	Help bouncing back after a mistake. Positive reinforcement.	Athlete #3, Athlete #8
Athlete #2	Extra push when tempted to give up.	Athlete #10
Athlete #3	Reassurance and guidance when things get hard.	Athlete #7, Athlete #12
Athlete #4	Confidence. I have a lot of negative self talk. Positive encouragement.	Athlete #14, Athlete #6

The LESSON to stress here: Everyone has needs/weaknesses that can be met by another's strength. The team will be stronger if everyone's needs are met throughout the season.

Examples to talk through with Team

Athlete Type	A Key Weakness	Who Can Help?
Rocket	Makes quick decisions without thinking through	Engineer - teach them how to more carefully think through decisions
Maverick	Has trouble following rules and directions	Eagle - monitor them re rules and directions
Ice	Highly critical and hard on self	Musketeer & Trailblazer - provide empathy to all teammates that mess up, especially Ice.
Eagle	Ignores flaws of self, prefers to focus on others	Engineer - has no problem bluntly pointing out an Eagle's missteps and steering them towards improvement
Musketeer	Tries to please everyone, can get taken advantage of	Knight - use protective instincts so Musketeers don't get taken advantage of
Trailblazer	Poor follow through	Eagle - help them follow through
Knight	Keeps it all inside	Rocket & Maverick - help teammates in social situations and in opening up, especially Knights
Engineer	Does not push self as hard	Ice - encourage them to push hard to succeed

Overall lessons to take away from this exercise

- A chain is only as strong as its weakest link
- Everyone has weaknesses, even professional athletes / superstars
- Other types have strengths to compensate for others weaknesses
- Mental diversity equals a strong team