TRUESPORT TALKS

MENTAL LOCK
Sport Performance Psychology

The Modern Pressure Playbook

A Coach's Emotional Regulation Toolkit | TrueSport Talks 2026

Pressure is part of sport. Emotional regulation is a skill you can practice. Emotions aren't weakness, they're information.

The 5 Steps: Notice. Name. Reset. Refocus. Reflect.

1. **Notice.** "What is happening in my body and mind?" Catch the signs early in body, thoughts, focus and sleep. Coach tool: a quick check-in before practice.
2. **Name**. "What emotion am I feeling?" Put a word to it, without judgment: "I'm anxious," "I'm frustrated." Naming it turns the volume down.
3. **Reset.** One slow breath, a cue word, then the next play. Practice the reset at practice, not just in games, so it's automatic under pressure.
4. **Refocus.** Use elite self-talk and pre-performance routines to bring attention back to the next controllable action.
5. **Reflect**. A 2-minute team debrief after practice and games: one thing that went well, one thing to practice next time.

Pick the Right Cue: The Five M's

Cue type	Example cues	When to use
Mechanics	"Quick hands" / "Plant foot"	Warming up and fixing mistakes
Motivational	"Let's get it!" / "Go time!"	Hard workouts
Momentum	"Explode" / "Power through"	Key moments, like going for a PR
Mastery	"Center" / "Ride the wave"	Stressful moments and after mistakes
Mercy	"Seen this movie" / "Failure leads to growth"	After mistakes or poor performances

Which 'M' do your athletes need most?

Build the skills. Protect joy. Support the whole athlete.

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